

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**Eightieth Session
February 22, 2019**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 8:32 a.m. on Friday, February 22, 2019, in Room 4100 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair
Assemblyman William McCurdy II, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Alex Assefa
Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod
Assemblyman Richard Carrillo
Assemblywoman Bea Duran
Assemblyman John Ellison
Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow
Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II
Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy
Assemblyman Glen Leavitt
Assemblywoman Susie Martinez
Assemblywoman Connie Munk

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Committee Counsel



Geigy Stringer, Committee Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Vaughn Hartung, County Commissioner, District 4; and Chairman of the Board of
County Commissioners, Washoe County
John Slaughter, County Manager, Washoe County
Bob Lucey, County Commissioner, District 2; and Vice Chair of the Board of County
Commissioners, Washoe County
Kathy Clewett, Legislative Liaison, City of Sparks
Stephen W. Driscoll, City Manager, City of Sparks
Ed Lawson, Council Member, Ward 2; and Mayor Pro Tempore, City of Sparks

Chair Flores:

[Roll was taken. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] We have two presentations on the agenda for today. We are going to take them in the order they are listed in the agenda. We will open up with the Washoe County presentation.

**Vaughn Hartung, County Commissioner, District 4; and Chairman of the Board of
County Commissioners, Washoe County:**

With me today, to my left, is Commissioner Bob Lucey, Vice Chair of the County Commission. To my right is County Manager John Slaughter, and at the far end is Jamie Rodriguez, our manager of government affairs. Mr. Slaughter will take it over. We appreciate the opportunity to come and speak before you.

John Slaughter, County Manager, Washoe County:

Washoe County finds itself, sometimes, as the middle child in county government in Nevada. We have our big sister, Clark County, and then the other 15 counties of the rural areas and Carson City. Washoe County is the second-largest county in Nevada. We operate under a commission-manager form of government. We have five elected county commissioners, which is not unusual. Several other counties do that; Clark County has seven. We have seven elected county officials. We are going to talk about their responsibilities and how they are different from those of other counties. We operate under *Nevada Revised Statutes* Chapter 244 and the *Washoe County Code*. We are very dependent upon all of the proceedings during the 120 days of the legislative session, so we are here working with you during that time. Our Washoe County Commission also serves as the board of fire commissioners for the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District outside of the boundaries of the Cities of Reno and Sparks, with some exceptions [page 3, ([Exhibit C](#))].

Our next page [page 4] talks about our governance structure. Within Washoe County, there are two incorporated cities. You will be hearing from Sparks in a few minutes. You have heard from the City of Reno and the Washoe County School District, the other larger entities of our jurisdictions. We have several smaller general improvement districts as listed on this page: Sun Valley, Incline, Gerlach, Palomino Valley, and North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection

District that are providing very specific types of services. They all provide a limited, higher level of service within their general improvement districts. They collect property tax and, in some cases, user fees, and consolidated tax in order to provide those services. On the right-hand side of that page is a list of the other boards and commissions on which our county commissioners serve. Our county commission members also serve on our Regional Transportation Commission, Nevada Association of Counties, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and a number of other agencies throughout the year, in addition to their duties as Washoe County commissioners.

Page 5 shows our organization chart. There are approximately 26 departments—I say approximately, because county government is different from city government in how we are organized. One of the main differences is on lines of authority. In county government, we have seven independently elected department directors: the district attorney, the sheriff, the county treasurer, county assessor, county recorder, the public administrator, and the county clerk. They have some independence, some autonomy, but they all fall within the budgeting authority of the county commission; therefore, it is necessary for us to work together to make sure that the commission is funding all of those services properly. In addition, we have the Second Judicial District Court that is a separate branch of government with 15 judges and, with the exception of the 15 judges, is funded by Washoe County. Reno, Sparks, Incline, and Gerlach are areas of the county that we all serve. Our budget is \$659 million.

Our elected county commission is on the next page [page 6, ([Exhibit C](#))]. Our Chair, Commissioner Vaughn Hartung, Vice Chair Bob Lucey, Commissioner Marsha Berkgigler, Commissioner Kitty Jung, and Commissioner Jeanne Herman, are all serving four-year terms.

On the next page [page 7] we list some of the services we provide in Washoe County, with metrics. The county commission over the last several years has put a high priority on serving our vulnerable populations. That includes children, seniors, and homeless. We are going to talk about those services in a few minutes, but in the last couple of years, we have put very high priority on children. The table shows 159 adoptions finalized in the last year; that should correctly say 233 adoptions finalized in the last year. On any given day, about 900 children are in our custody in some manner through foster care or working through the adoption process.

We put an emphasis on our senior services. Note, the page lists almost 5,000 individual seniors served. We are approaching 450,000 in meals served annually through the several congregate meal sites throughout the county, as well as through our Meals on Wheels program. The commission placing a priority on that a few years ago increased our meal delivery program to two meals per day. It is not enough—we are always looking for ways to increase that—but we are very proud of how we have increased that over the years.

There is one jail in Washoe County, our consolidated jail. Our jail processes about 21,000 bookings annually.

We have one animal services program within the county that we provide in partnership with our cities. About 13,000 animals are sheltered there. We have a unique collaboration with the Nevada Humane Society, wherein we have half of the building and they have the other half of the building. We are very proud of that relationship. We have one of the lowest euthanasia rates in the nation. When I am traveling and people hear that I am from Washoe County, those who are animal lovers want to talk to me about how are we accomplishing that. I credit the partnership with the Nevada Humane Society.

The Washoe County Library System provides all the library services within the county. A very highly utilized program, we have 13 branch libraries throughout the county with about 2 million volumes borrowed throughout the year.

Note a summary there [page 7, ([Exhibit C](#))] of our annual budget with some of the revenue sources. Our annual general fund budget is \$347 million, and our total budget from all funds is about \$660 million.

The next page [page 8] orients you a bit to Washoe County. As you are heading to the airport this afternoon, when you cross over into Washoe Valley, you enter Washoe County into the metropolitan area of Reno and Sparks. Incline Village at Lake Tahoe is part of Washoe County, all the way north—the yellow area on the map. Halfway up there on the map is the town of Gerlach, which is the jumping-off point to Burning Man. As you continue for a couple more hours north to the Oregon border, you are within Washoe County. We have Washoe County employees working and living throughout all those areas, providing services through all of the 6,500 square miles of Washoe County.

Our regional service responsibilities are on the next page [page 9]. Some are very typical county services, typical to Nevada. Some are different in how we provide them in Washoe County. I talked about animal services. Our consolidated jail houses not only the Sheriff's Office but also our regional crime lab. There are only two crime labs in the state of Nevada, one in Clark County and one in Washoe County. Our sheriff has a number of agreements to provide crime lab services to many other counties within Nevada, as well as to some of our neighboring California counties and cities. I have talked about our district court, our justice courts within Washoe County: we have our Reno Justice Court, Sparks Justice Court, Incline Village-Crystal Bay Justice Court, and Wadsworth/Gerlach Justice Court. We are providing libraries within Washoe County. We have agreements with the City of Reno and City of Sparks to provide all of the elections during our election cycle.

In the other areas of the county, outside of the incorporated Cities of Reno and Sparks, we provide the local services listed on page 10. Many of these are provided through user fees of some sort—building and safety services, business licensing, and fire protection. Three different departments provide fire protection. I mentioned Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, for which our county commission sits as the fire board. The North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District at Incline Village is a separately elected fire board. In the far northern areas of Washoe County, we have three volunteer fire departments that are funded from the general fund.

The next page has a breakdown of our general fund revenues [page 11, ([Exhibit C](#))]. The two largest sources are property tax and consolidated tax. About 49 percent of our revenue comes from our property tax and 33 percent comes from consolidated tax.

The next page [page 12] shows general fund expenditures by type. Salaries and benefits are our largest expenditure. That is not unique to Washoe County. It is a local government reality. We are providing services that are provided through our employees; therefore, that is our largest expenditure. On the next page [page 13] is another expenditure breakout by function. Forty-two percent of our annual budget falls within the public safety function, which is defined specifically to include: sheriff, juvenile services, medical examiner, et cetera. Seventy percent of our expenditures are to our employees, and when further broken out by function, 42 percent is toward the public safety areas of our services.

The next page [page 14] shows property tax revenue history going back to 2004. We include this to talk about the impact that the recession had on county government. You can see how we are only concluding our recovery. We are still dealing with the recession and are just coming out of the recovery as a local government. We lag behind in many other cases in recovering from those types of events, so you can see that in 2020 we are just beginning to be at the point where we were at the beginning of the recession.

Our consolidated tax revenue history is on the next slide [page 15]. It shows a very similar type of graph showing a recovery for consolidated tax revenues.

We are going to move on to updates from the last legislative session on three specific topics [page 17]. Some of these came through this Committee. Number one concerns body cameras required by Senate Bill 176 of the 79th Session. In Washoe County, body cameras have been implemented; they are fully implemented within all the jurisdictions required to do so. The county commission approved an increase in the telephone bills of 85 cents starting in May 2018. We prepared a five-year master plan, and the increase is in line with that. Another topic of interest from last session is the DNA testing of sexual assault kits. Of the 1,027 submitted kits, we have completed 889 tests and received 88 CODIS [Combined DNA Index System] hits. Finally, through a partnership with the state, we implemented new election voting machines. We had a few hiccups in our primary, but we made some adjustments and had very few, if any, issues in our general election. We are extremely happy with the performance of those machines.

Earlier I mentioned our county commission's commitment to our vulnerable populations. For this page [page 18] and this topic, I am going to turn the presentation over to Vice Chair Bob Lucey.

Bob Lucey, County Commissioner, District 2; and Vice Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, Washoe County:

We have taken a very robust stance on our vulnerable populations in Washoe County. It has been a challenge for us within the county for some time. Through a unique partnership with the state, we have been very fortunate to move forward with some very instrumental plans

toward making some drastic changes for those vulnerable populations. The Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS) facility had been sitting dormant for quite some time. It is located on the border of Reno and Sparks, in the downtown area right off the Truckee River. This is a state-owned property that for some time has had very little use. Through an association with the state, we were able to acquire the facility and move some vulnerable populations there, from the Community Assistance Center—our homeless center in downtown Reno. Populations in our homeless center have been comingled for quite some time. This acquisition allows us to move women and children out of the downtown center into the NNAMHS campus. It allows us to expand our Crossroads Program, which I will speak to in a second. It allows us to bring all of our Washoe County services to one campus. We will be able to provide services for these individuals. We will be able to do outreach. We will provide a number of different things that we have not been able to do at our Community Assistance Center for quite some time. It allows us the separation of populations, which we have been working with the federal government and state Department of Health and Human Services to address. It is going to be fantastic for our vulnerable populations as we move forward. The expected addition and increase in bed availability for these women and children will be about 220 new beds, which we will deliver through a number of different projects.

Our Crossroads Program [page 19, [Exhibit C](#)] is a nationally recognized program that has been constituted for some time. We are in our fifth year of the program. The program selects from our vulnerable populations—for example serial inebriates—those who would benefit from intervention. These individuals get the services that they need to get into transitional housing—that first step back to true recovery. This program has been highly successful. It has given the opportunity to a number of individuals for whom, ultimately, local government would be taxed to the tune of almost \$15 million to \$18 million a year. We are changing outcomes for these individuals. Instead of maintaining them in services year after year, we are making sure that they are getting that opportunity to move forward. It is lowering our costs for first responders, continued services, ongoing jail costs, and a number of issues such that the \$15 million to \$18 million is now being directed to transitional housing and first start. We look forward to continuing to grow the program. Through a partnership with the NNAMHS campus we are now expanding our women's Crossroads, giving them the same opportunities and adding more housing and beds for those individuals as well. It is a very successful program. I am very happy that we are continuing to grow Crossroads, and I look forward to many years of continued and joint support between the state and the county.

John Slaughter:

That concludes our presentation. The last page [page 20] lists our legislative team. We also have with us today Kate Thomas, our assistant county manager for services and operations; Dave Solaro, assistant county manager for services and operations; and Christine Vuletich, assistant county manager for finance and administration. Corey Solferino, from the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, is here as well. He is here occasionally, should you have questions about the Sheriff's Office. On the list are our other staff who will be here to help you as needed. Mr. Chair, I have a very high regard for this particular Committee. I spent many

years as Washoe County's staff member in Carson City. I spent many hours before this Committee and I know it to be a very hardworking one, on very important work. If you have questions and you need information from Washoe County, you can contact anyone on that list, but Jamie Rodriguez will be here and most available to you.

We are happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Chair Flores:

Thank you for the presentation and thank you for being here.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

I want to commend you for increasing your Meals on Wheels program to two meals a day. That is something that I have heard is a problem statewide for individuals who cannot leave their home for various reasons. Getting one meal a day was just not enough for them— even if it was a great meal, it just was not enough. I commend you for upping that to two. At some point maybe we can get to three, so they can have the same amount of meals as the rest of us who can get out of the house.

Do you have a public-private partnership? Do you work with other nonprofits to subsidize some of the cost? Do you coordinate with them on delivery for this program and any other special programs that operate within?

John Slaughter:

Yes, we do have a number of partnerships with the state and federal government, as well as with private nonprofits, to provide those services. One of the things that we know—which is why it was so important for us to increase those meals—for over 40 percent of the seniors, that meal is the only meal they get. It is extremely important and we are working all the time to find ways to increase that. Yes, we do have partnerships. We have a partnership with the delivery service that provides meal deliveries. We are always looking for ways to increase delivery to three meals.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

What we are also missing is that it is not the only meal they get—it is the only visit they get. Oftentimes, if they can get two visits a day, it will increase their quality of life just to have someone stop by for five minutes to drop off a meal. That is an important thing to get out there. It is not only the meal, but it is the human contact that they get as well.

John Slaughter:

That is exactly right—that interaction with someone from the outside. Right now, we have a great partnership with Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada. They are a wonderful partner. Also, for those seniors that are somewhat mobile and can either utilize their own vehicles or some form of public transit, we have multiple places where they can be served meals so that they can interact with a group of peers and have a social life. You are spot-on, thank you.

Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod:

Did you mention the population of Washoe County? What are your most recent numbers?

John Slaughter:

I did not, so thank you for catching that. The number is 469,000—it is in the pages, I am not sure which. Our largest population area is the metropolitan area of Reno-Sparks and the unincorporated areas immediately surrounding that area.

Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod:

You are doing amazing things. I am always impressed when I am up here. I look at the population of Washoe County, which is 469,000, compared to the population of Clark County, which is 2.2 million, and we do get a little jealous. You are able to serve more people with the piece of the pie that you get. Why we look to you for so many things is, you do so many things right. We do get a little jealous that you can do so much more.

Assemblyman Assefa:

Can you tell me whether, on your website, a resident of Washoe County who is an eligible voter or a registered voter has a way to enter his or her information or geographical location and be able to pull up a sample ballot for any given election?

Vaughn Hartung:

It is interesting that you ask that. I actually had a bill in the past for a paperless sample ballot and my ultimate goal is to see that we get to a point where we can do virtually everything online unless someone does not want to interact online. Then we are happy to accommodate with a snail mail process. One absolutely can—in fact, a number of people, including my own family, have opted out of that paper ballot, and we have gone completely to a paperless sample ballot. If we could get everyone in the state to do the same, the savings would be in the millions of dollars. Imagine how fast we could turn things around in terms of emergency elections or for any change that becomes necessary or in regard to any ballot language that can simply be uploaded.

Assemblyman Assefa:

Is your electronic sample ballot an opt-in email system, or can one get on your website and enter one's information so he or she can download a sample ballot?

John Slaughter:

We are getting a demo of the software capable of what you are asking next week. By next election we will be launching the capability to go online, enter your information, and receive your sample ballot.

Assemblyman Assefa:

At this point you do have a way for somebody to opt in to your email system?

John Slaughter:

Correct.

Assemblywoman Martinez:

You spoke about how your animal shelter has a very low euthanasia rate. Have you shared your methods with other organizations throughout Nevada to help them have the same success rate as you?

John Slaughter:

The answer is yes. As I mentioned, people are sometimes jealous about the program that we have. Our animal services director is very involved statewide. She communicates frequently with her counterparts throughout the state. The partnership that we have with the Humane Society, wherein they are in our building when the animals come in and they are immediately available to help assess the animals and prepare them for adoption, is really what makes our animal shelter successful.

Assemblywoman Martinez:

Thank you and keep up the good work.

Chair Flores:

We do not have any other questions. Thank you for your presentation. Members will reach out as questions come up. The next presentation is from the City of Sparks.

Kathy Clewett, Legislative Liaison, City of Sparks:

I am happy to be here to introduce you to my happening city—that is one of our taglines, "It is happening here." With me today are Mayor Pro Tempore Ed Lawson, City Manager Steve Driscoll, and Assistant City Manager Neil Krutz. Also here is our registered lobbyist from Carrara Nevada, Ms. Jenny Reese. We have a short PowerPoint presentation to introduce you to our city. Please feel free to ask any questions while we are going through the presentation.

Stephen W. Driscoll, City Manager, City of Sparks:

Sparks was originally a railroad town. It was incorporated in March 1905. Today we are a very vibrant community. We have a very diverse economy and population. Our population is just under 100,000, and we will probably go over that this year. We are the fifth-largest city in the state of Nevada. We enjoy four seasons. We are situated in the Truckee Meadows, along with the City of Reno and the residents of Washoe County. We enjoy Lake Tahoe to our west and high country desert to our east.

As Ms. Clewett mentioned, it is happening now and happening here, in the City of Sparks. We have had that tagline for quite a while. We have year-round, internationally attended events as well as local community festivals that happen in the city on a regular basis. We have the Sports Complex at Golden Eagle Regional Park in the northern part of the city. It has over 1 million square feet of synthetic turf playing fields. It is the largest sports complex like it in the entire nation. There, we have championship softball tournaments 11 months out of the year, of which quite a few are televised during the summertime. We boast to be one of the favorite stops for the over-50, over-60, over-70, and over-80 softball tournaments in the

springtime. We also have other fields available for youth sports, including baseball, football, soccer, lacrosse, rugby, and one of the most popular, kickball.

Some of the events we celebrate are Hometown Christmas in December, Star Spangled Sports 4th of July, Hot August Nights, which is a 1960s and 1970s car/music festival, and one of the largest events, the one to bring in the largest number of folks, the Best of the West Rib Cook-Off. We do not want to forget our very popular and ever-increasing Pumpkin Palooza in October. In addition, we have a very large Turkey Trot at our marina on Thanksgiving morning.

We are a council-manager form of government. Our council is composed of a separately elected mayor and five council members representing our five wards. The council employs a professional management team including myself as the manager. Our five wards recently converted to ward-only voting. We have representation through this body, but more specifically, we have three Assembly representatives and two Senate representatives whose districts incorporate all of the boundaries of the City of Sparks.

The City of Sparks does things a little differently than many other cities when it comes to working with the Legislature. We developed a legislative team [page 6, ([Exhibit D](#))] to try to help provide information to this body when you need it. The team is made up of two elected officials who are appointed by the council, our government affairs staff that includes the manager (myself) and the assistant city manager and Kathy Clewett, and then we use Carrera Nevada for both strategic and lobbying assistance. Our legislative team can provide the information that this body needs when we cannot get the full board together within the Open Meeting Law and other time frames. This smaller board has provided you with our legislative platform, which is meant to give you a feel for the things that we support and are able to work toward or things that will come before this body that we are concerned about. Our legislative team is designed to assist you in the best way we can.

Even though day-to-day operations are what we are focused on, as with most organizations we do think strategically. Our strategic plan looks to the next five years. We focus on the vision of the council, which is to be the city of choice for residents, businesses, and visitors. In order to do that, we have focused on four main categories of public safety, infrastructure and technology, economic development for the city, and citizen engagement [page 7]. We have quite a few organizational units that are designed to reach out, including a new committee recently formed by our council to engage senior citizens in an advisory capacity.

We are a chartered city. The City of Sparks is one of 13 chartered cities in Nevada. As with all of the state's chartered cities, Sparks' charter defines our city structure. It defines the roles, responsibilities, and duties of our elected officials. It defines our elections and terms of office that are important for continuity and it provides for staffing at all levels. Our charter is reviewed every two years by an independent charter committee as provided in the charter, whose members are appointed by elected officials of both the city and of this body. The charter committee is responsible for reviewing city operations. They look at how the official

rules that you have set forth for them affect the city. They are independent. They do not need approval to make the changes to the charter from the council, but they do ask.

We are a council-manager form of government. The city manager is appointed by the mayor and ratified by the council. The city manager is responsible for appointing the remainder of the staff for the city. We have seven bargaining units and five employee pay resolutions for those that are not in bargaining status. We use a civil service system for the hiring and promotion processes for those seven bargaining units. Additionally, we have about 200 part-time employees on an annual basis that work in maintenance functions—predominantly in the park—and in the before- and after-school child care system that we provide during the school year and as recreation leaders in the all-day program we provide in the summertime. In the summertime growing season we increase our maintenance staff with part-time workers. We also increase the number of recreational leaders, such that in the summer we easily reach a number of over 400 temporary employees.

There are two areas of the city that are truly vital to what we do. One is our downtown area, known as Victorian Square. This is our "living room" where we invite people to come for all the special events during the year. We have had more than 1 million people in a year attend all the different events that we have. There is new development downtown. For a long time it was nothing but many parking lots. Downtown Victorian Square is the oldest redevelopment area in the state. For more than 30 years the redevelopment goal was not sticking—it is now. We have five new housing developments that will bring more than 2,000 units to house 3,000 to 4,000 people in the downtown area, which in turn is bringing retail and restaurants to the area. There are three new restaurants opening in the next month. One is a brand-new winery. The new housing is very important for vitalization and bringing people to the downtown area. We just approved a brand-new outdoor concert venue. The first concert will be held there on June 15, 2019. This venue will seat 8,500 people. It is a little bit smaller than the outdoor arena in Laughlin, but it is almost 25 percent bigger than a very popular outdoor summer concert venue at South Lake Tahoe.

The other is Sparks Marina Park—a gem for us. We turned what was once a gravel pit into an award-winning 80-acre lake right in the middle of town. It is heavily used. More than 30,000 people are in and around the lake on a monthly basis. They are walking, they are jogging, they are pushing strollers, they are in the water swimming at the two beaches, and they are paddle boarding as well. There is championship fishing. We purchase fish from the Nevada Department of Wildlife's fishery program on a regular basis during those instances where they need fish to be moved out of their hatchery; we stock the lake with those and make it fun for the folks that catch and release. There are large fish in the lake that are a lot of fun to catch. Mr. Lawson is involved with a service organization that puts on a free fishing day in June where we have a large number of children from all over the community come and enjoy; we have the lake specially stocked for the event so the kids all have a very good experience.

The two sand beaches in the park are pictured there [page 11, ([Exhibit D](#))]. There are places for volleyball and sunbathing. Anything you can imagine that would happen on a beach

happens there. We host some nationally televised events on this lake. We have a Jet Ski™ tournament, we have dragon boat races, and we also have a water ski competition. The lake does not allow motorized vessels, with the exception of these motorized competitions, which are special for the fact that they are televised in such a way that the camera angle captures the Sierra Nevada in the background. It is quite picturesque. We like to think of the Sparks Marina as being the heart of the tri-lakes area in conjunction with Lake Tahoe and Pyramid Lake.

The next page is busy and small [page 12, ([Exhibit D](#))]. It is not intended for discussion. The page has details on the organization of the city. While getting into the details can be particularly boring, what is most important here is the road map it provides our citizens and visitors alike to the city's elected officials and professional staff who are in charge of providing the services that they ask for.

The next page [page 13] looks at the fiscal information that I know this Committee focuses on. As with the previous presentation, we are going to look at revenues and expenses. We have about a \$70 million general fund. The entire city budget is just a little over \$200 million. We have three big revenue sources in the general fund: property tax, consolidated fair share tax, which is predominantly sales tax, and licensing and permits. Those three sources represent 93 percent of all the revenue that we receive from the general fund. We will discuss abatement on another page related to property tax. Sales tax for the entire state has been strong, but we recognize that it is volatile, so we watch this source very carefully and watch the different segments that are inside the city. Within licenses and permits, permits are strong. Building in the city is as strong as it is down south. We are getting houses built as quickly as we can to address the different issues related to housing of all types, both affordable and above-market. One of the newest among the revenues inside licenses and permits, representing about 10 percent of it, is \$1.4 million of new revenue from the marijuana industry. We have isolated that money and are trying not to use it for operations until the federal government makes a decision regarding marijuana in general. Right now the Sports Complex at Golden Eagle Park needs about \$1 million a year to replace turf to keep it safe for the players. The council has dedicated \$1 million of the \$1.4 million for that—we talk about the program being grass for grass. The remainder of the money will be used to refresh our technology—our equipment and software systems—to keep us current and enable us to provide the best customer service possible, especially for those services that are related to children.

On the expense side [page 14], as a service organization 74 percent of the money we spend in the general fund is for salaries and benefits. We are only as good as the people that provide the services to our citizens. Another way of looking at this is, if you look at the \$70 million that is on this chart, expenditures for police and fire consume about 70 percent of that \$70 million—just those two departments.

This chart [page 15] is a little busy. We use it with our council and our citizens to explain history. The green bars that are in the background are assessed value. We can see how it ramped up, then the recession took it back down, and since then we have been struggling to

bring it back up to the prerecession level. What is more important on this graph—and what we use it for—are the three lines. The red line is property tax. Property tax is slow to react downward and it is even slower to react upward. Note the difference between that red line and the green assessed value bar. Right now we have about \$4.4 million in abatement related to all the tax cap formulas. I know that this body will be having conversations related to revenues in the future. Sales tax is the blue line. Note how volatile it was during the recession and how strong it has been coming forward. The purple line at the bottom is licenses and permits. The main increase in that line, over our business licenses, is building permits and the marijuana revenue that we talked about a moment ago.

To conclude, the city has no bill drafts of our own this session. Our charter committee, which has the ability to bring bill drafts separately, does not have any either. Our platform, as we have presented to you, is to support what you do here, especially when there is enabling language that allows us to work with you in deciding what is right for the city and to be in concert with you in accomplishing goals. You will see Senate Bill 25 later in the session after it works its way through the Senate; it is a change to codify our ability to use funds from the 911 fund that was approved in the last session to hire people to manage the body camera requirements.

We are prepared to answer questions that the Chair or the Committee might have.

Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod:

I enjoy Sparks very much. I move my family here [for the session] so we immerse ourselves in northern Nevada and my daughter is a huge fan of Coconut Bowl. We like it a lot, and Grimaldi's Pizzeria—do not tell Carson City—but there is no good pizza in Carson City. You mentioned your child care program. Does that include a preschool?

Steven Driscoll:

We do have a preschool program. We do have before- and after-school programs in the elementary schools. In addition to that, we have programs during the school breaks, including breaks for the year-round schools that we have. During the summertime, for the children from kindergarten through sixth grade, we have Summer Outburst, which offers outdoor and indoor activities, crafts, arts, and field trips all over northern Nevada. The daycare program that we have has been very strong. It is licensed and we run the maximum numbers that we can and add sites when necessary.

Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod:

I am actually very curious about the preschool. You indicated that you have a preschool program. What are those numbers? Do you waitlist? How many sites do you have those in, and what is the cost?

Steven Driscoll:

I do not recall the number off the top of my head. I do know that we are at maximum at any point in time and we do have waiting lists. The waiting list then drives us to open additional sites. We have two primary sites right now.

Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod:

If you could get that information to Committee, I would surely appreciate it.

Assemblyman Ellison:

I go by Sparks a lot. It seems to me like it is growing massively where SCHEELS is and the surrounding area. It seems like every week you have either a car show or a motor home show or something. Are those put on by Sparks or are they put on by one of the stores down there?

Ed Lawson, Council Member, Ward 2; and Mayor Pro Tempore, City of Sparks:

The mall owners put them on. They rent the space to folks who come in to sell whatever it is. Right now we are in the process of building a new motor home facility there, where they will have sales and repair and whatnot for motor homes, on the back part of the lot. We are looking forward to some good growth there too.

Assemblyman Ellison:

It is amazing. I remember when Granite Construction had the big old pit there and the dust that would go across the road—to what it is now. It is beautiful. You guys have done a great job.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

I have only been to Sparks a few times and the few times that I have been there it has been a pleasant experience. It looks like you guys are doing a good job of growth and making things viable. What I did not get from your presentation is, Do you have a list of priorities and can you touch upon your top three or top five priorities moving into the future?

Steven Driscoll:

Within the strategic plan, one of the primary goals of the council is a safe community. We have done intense land management and land planning that has been defined since the early 2000s towards that. Within the city are many different districts, and those districts each have defined planning documents that talk about what is going to be there, and we focus on housing and all the support that housing requires—the commercial activities that have to be there, along with school partnerships. We are growing fairly intensely to the north. We have three major national builders that are building houses of all types, both multifamily and single-family. We wish there was a little more emphasis on affordable housing. That is a -+function of the capitalistic world. The primary list of things that the council focuses on are things that benefit the quality of life, the ability to live and work and play inside the corporate boundaries or having very effective transportation systems to get citizens to the other parts of the valley.

Chair Flores:

Members, are there any additional questions?

Assemblyman McCurdy:

Can you speak to some of the priorities of the council and some of the steps that you are taking to address the affordable housing crisis? While it is amazing to have national developers coming into the city and doing good work, as you know, the council really sets the priorities for what is going to happen within the city.

Ed Lawson:

I am going to address that in two ways. One, if you look at our industrial area—we have a fairly substantial industrial area along the river, south of Interstate 80 and north of the Truckee River. That is now an Opportunity Zone. We are in the process right now of putting a residential overlay on that industrial area. Because it is in a flood zone, everything has to be built roughly five feet off the ground. That site will not suit a clean manufacturing operation. We have many tilt-up concrete buildings there that I believe are going to go away. I have talked to several developers who want to put multifamily housing and condominiums there. We in essence are taking back our river. I grew up in Las Vegas and I know water was a big thing. When it flooded, it was like having a river for me—it was wonderful. But we have this beautiful river that flows right through our city that we have tilt-up concrete buildings next to. We are taking back our river.

Two, in regard to affordable housing, I have talked to two of the developers specifically about including a percentage—and we are figuring out what that percentage is right now—of transitional housing. As Commissioner Lucey said, we sit on the community homeless advisory board. Transitional housing to get people out of the cycle of homelessness is very important. We have talked about either low income 60 percent of area median income, or some type of angel fund into which developers or charities can put monies, and the city will provide first and last and rent assistance for those folks for a period of time to help them transition.

Steven Driscoll:

Sparks is in partnership with Washoe County and the City of Reno. Together we maximize the monies that we have that can be used for affordable housing. We share the dollars that come through the Washoe County HOME Consortium. The partnership has a housing authority that has a large inventory of units that can be used for the Housing First program and that has a large subsidy program. Acting together as a triad allows us to maximize bonding capacity and bring together monies we receive individually from the federal government, including our Community Development Block Grant funding. Additionally, with the land management that all three of us do together, we are able to really focus on bringing many of the projects to bear. In the last few years we have done several senior housing projects, private apartments, and we have increased the ability to execute the Housing First program in combination with our homeless awareness.

Assemblywoman Duran:

It sounds like you are doing a lot of good things in the summertime and things are picking up. You said that you had 200 part-time employees and then you increase the number to 400 for your maintenance. Is that because there is not just enough work throughout the year?

Are those employees included in the benefits and salaries that are on page 14 under general fund expenditures?

Steven Driscoll:

The number of temporaries that we use is a function of the work. During the wintertime we do not do a lot of heavy maintenance. Depending on the amount of hours that they work or the number of months that they work, temporary employees do become eligible for benefits, in which case they would be included in the number that is on that page. We have tried, especially post-recession, to maximize the services we can get for the money and to provide as much employment as possible, even though it has to be in some cases on a temporary basis.

Assemblywoman Duran:

Will there be room for these people who are working full-time and are able to afford it, to move into your affordable housing as they come up?

Steven Driscoll:

Having that need always there guides our intent. We are bringing employees on as our budget improves. We lost 37 percent of our staff in 2008 and 2009. Only about 5 percent of that number have actually come back. Every year, in managing the different budgets and the different funds that we have, we are always looking to increase manpower because that is how we provide services. To the best of our ability, we bring people on full-time, underneath the full benefit structure.

Chair Flores:

With that, we are good. I have not missed anybody, correct? Thank you for the presentation. Members, please reach out with any questions. We are going to close out the presentation and invite anyone wishing to speak in public comment to come forward—Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod is ready to have a pizza debate—she started the issue, so come ready. I do not see anybody for public comment.

Are there any final comments? Seeing none, this meeting is adjourned [at 9:36 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Geigy Stringer
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.

[Exhibit C](#) is a PowerPoint presentation titled "Presentation to Assembly Committee on Government Affairs," dated February 22, 2019, presented by Vaughn Hartung, County Commissioner, District 4; and Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, Washoe County; Bob Lucey, County Commissioner, District 2; and Vice Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, Washoe County; and John Slaughter, County Manager, Washoe County.

[Exhibit D](#) is a PowerPoint presentation titled "City of Sparks," dated February 22, 2019, presented by Stephen W. Driscoll, City Manager, City of Sparks.