

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

**Eighty-First Session  
February 23, 2021**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 9:03 a.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 2021, Online. 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/81st2021](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair  
Assemblywoman Selena Torres, Vice Chair  
Assemblywoman Natha C. Anderson  
Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May  
Assemblywoman Venicia Considine  
Assemblywoman Jill Dickman  
Assemblywoman Bea Duran  
Assemblyman John Ellison  
Assemblywoman Susie Martinez  
Assemblyman Andy Matthews  
Assemblyman Richard McArthur  
Assemblywoman Clara Thomas

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Assemblywoman Annie Black (excused)

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

None

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst  
Erin Sturdivant, Committee Counsel  
Judith Bishop, Committee Manager  
Kyla Beecher, Committee Secretary  
Cheryl Williams, Committee Assistant



**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Calli Wilsey, Senior Management Analyst, Intergovernmental Relations, City of Reno

Doug Thornley, City Manager, City of Reno

Joanna Jacob, Government Affairs Manager, Clark County

Yolanda King, County Manager, Clark County

Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager, Clark County

Annemarie Grant, Private Citizen, Quincy, Massachusetts

**Chair Flores:**

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] Today should be short. We have two presentations. I expect that we will have a lot of questions. That is the process. We are going to take the agenda out of order. We will start with the presentation by the City of Reno. Good morning and welcome.

**Calli Wilsey, Senior Management Analyst, Intergovernmental Relations, City of Reno:**

I am honored to be joined by our city manager, Doug Thornley. Mr. Thornley was sworn in as our city manager in October 2020. He brings with him an extensive background in both government and the legal field. City Manager Thornley will be leading the bulk of today's presentations. I will wrap up with some information about our legislative priorities this session. With that, I will turn it over to our city manager.

**Doug Thornley, City Manager, City of Reno:**

I know it is best to be brief. I have heard that right from the jump. I would like to introduce our mayor and council. Then I will talk about the Biggest Little City in two parts. First, I would like to describe the universal challenge in our country and state: response and recovery from the global pandemic. Second, our long-range effort to ensure fiscal stability so we can continue to provide high-quality services to the folks in our community.

We have worked diligently with our regional partners to assure a united response [page 2, [Exhibit C](#)] building a regulatory framework, through which Truckee Meadows has been able to reduce testing positivity rate and the spread of COVID-19. We have done a good job in Washoe County of working collaboratively to make sure those responses and frameworks are uniform across all jurisdictions.

Our seven-member board [page 3] has the mayor, an at-large council member, and the rest of the city is divided into five wards. Hillary Schieve is our mayor. Jenny Brekhus is in Ward 1; Naomi Duerr is in Ward 2; Oscar Delgado in Ward 3; Bonnie Weber in Ward 4; and Neoma Jardon in Ward 5. They have admirably led our community during this pandemic.

They do not work alone. The state, Washoe County, City of Sparks, and the Washoe County Health District have been tremendous partners in coordinating our regional response, from communications, to distribution of personal protective equipment, and the effort to vaccinate

our community. The regional emergency operations centers [page 4] are on point effectively and efficiently delivering all of those services to our citizens.

As a city, we are proud of the support we have been able to offer our employees and businesses here in Reno [page 5, [Exhibit C](#)] through temporary regulatory flexibility and maximizing the use of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. In addition to reduced and deferred fees for business licenses and other services, we have allowed certain outdoor operations so that businesses can remain open and comply with social distancing requirements. We have worked hard to make sure that people could safely keep working. That effort required significant investment.

Our council identified one dozen priority categories [page 6] to guide how we spend the \$46.7 million Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) allocated to the City of Reno. Like every jurisdiction we had certain hard costs. I would like to highlight a couple of special points. First, number 12 is remote education relief. We spent \$2.7 million to buy thousands of laptop computers for the Washoe County School District to be distributed to the students who did not have the infrastructure at home to participate in distance learning. Second, number 8, we spent \$1.6 million on COVID-19-related mental health response. We made a significant investment in protecting our unsheltered populations from the spread of COVID-19. We have spent \$5.7 million on business impact relief programs.

We have been able to provide financial assistance to 776 local businesses [page 7]. I am happy that we got that extra one. It would have been serendipitous to have 775. Of those, there are 300 local artists and musicians who we have also been able to take care of through this allocation and relief program. We are proud that we were able to highlight women- and minority-owned businesses in this assistance program. We were able to get grants into their hands very quickly.

One of the things that we have been working on, as a community, is building a central location for wraparound services, sheltering, and ultimately transitional housing [page 8]. The two identified parcels are what has been referred to as the "Governor's Bowl Park," or the baseball field, are flat surfaces and are where sheltering and transitional housing will take place in the future. We have been given this tremendous opportunity to make a capital investment that should help the unsheltered community and the community at-large for years to come.

We spent \$1 million distributing food [page 9] to our vulnerable populations and other residents. We made sure that we were able to provide thousands of laptops to keep remote learning moving in a positive direction. We have mental health support. I am sure you have all read about Talkspace. Talkspace is an app that provides free licensed mental health therapy services for every Reno resident over the age of 13.

Our long-term focus is financial stability for core municipal services [page 10]. That is the function we provide for this community. Some of the challenges that we face are worth the Committee's attention.

This is us [page 11]. We are the third-largest city in the state. We have almost 1,300 full-time employees. We are 106 square miles. We have been around for more than 100 years.

These are the services we provide [page 12, [Exhibit C](#)]. These are the buckets, all the usual suspects, in terms of public safety. We have a planning department and business licensing. For wastewater and stormwater management, we work in concert with our partners in Sparks and Washoe County to ensure that we have an appropriate regional framework and infrastructure built to protect the larger space in the Truckee Meadows. In recent years, sustainability is something that we have been working on and have been proud of here in Reno.

One of the challenges we are having is with the manner in which we deliver services to our unsheltered population [page 13]. This shows the tremendous investment we have been making in the last year. We serve as the lead entity for operations and oversight of the men's shelter in the region. This is unusual. Normally, unsheltered populations are primarily served through the county in which they live. We are the regional lead for the continuum of care. We provide direct outreach through the Clean and Safe Team. That group goes out and makes connections with our unsheltered population and makes sure that they have knowledge of the services that we are able to provide in this community. If there is an opportunity for us to make connections for them, that is what we do. Every year we spend about \$5.2 million in homeless-related services.

Our general fund revenue [page 14] looks like this. You can see that \$5 million is a significant opportunity cost when we are looking at our general fund revenue. We are evenly split between property tax and consolidated tax. The franchise fees and the business licenses make up the remaining third of this puzzle.

Here is how we spend it [page 15]. Like other government entities, salaries, wages, and employee benefits take up a large chunk of the general fund expenditures. Services and supplies keep the lights on. We have been consistently chipping away at our debt service and moving that in the right direction, in our estimation. We are proud of that. Capital outlay is relatively low. Our capital program in the general fund could stand some attention. We are talking about the opportunity costs. A lot of our capital investment comes from our enterprise funds.

This is our five-year strategic plan [page 16], which was adopted in February of last year. It had about three weeks to get off the ground before, like everyone else, we had to focus on something else for the year. These are the strategic goals that our council set for our city:

1. Fiscal sustainability.
2. Safe and efficient delivery of public safety services for our community.

3. Economic opportunity for those who choose to make Reno home. Focus on the unsheltered population and affordable housing makes sense. That is where the opportunity cost comes to bear. The Reno Housing Authority and the money being spent in terms of the continuum of care would otherwise go to support affordable housing in our city and region.
4. Economic and community development. We have been looking at what is bringing high-quality and well-paying jobs to our region. We are making sure that we are coordinating that inflow with housing and infrastructure. We are working with the school district to make sure that the services people need, when they choose to move to a place, are available in real time.
5. We are focused on infrastructure, climate change, and environmental stability.
6. We are very proud of the public artwork that we have in the City of Reno. Preserving things of historical significance has been a priority for our council.

This all comes back to our first goal. For us to do any of the things we have deemed important enough to make this list, we need to be fiscally sustainable. We work hard to stretch our existing revenues to provide those core services. We continue to advocate, to this group and others, for sustainable and equitable allocation of the property tax and modernization of the tax structure. We are in the process of realigning the manner in which services are provided regionally with Washoe County and the City of Sparks. We hope those discussions will yield a positive result for everyone involved in the relatively near future.

I am going to stand by for questions. You can see the city's legislative priorities [page 17, [Exhibit C](#)]. I will hand this back to Ms. Wilsey.

**Calli Wilsey:**

This has two bills [page 17] that we are carrying this year. Both are related to what City Manager Thornley was discussing—fiscal sustainability and making that one of the highest priorities so we can accomplish all the goals that our council has set out.

The first one is Senate Bill 73, which authorizes a ballot initiative to provide funding for parks, recreation, open space, and natural resources. The second one is Senate Bill 11, which authorizes cities within Washoe County to enact the supplemental governmental services tax.

The last page we wanted to leave you with [page 18] is contact information. We look forward to working with all of you during this legislative session. I am available to answer questions and be a resource, however I can help. We contract with the Griffin Company and they are available, as well. With that, City Manager Thornley and I are available for your questions.

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

I have the honor and pleasure of serving as an Assembly member for a little of the Reno area, around the Neil Road area. My question has to deal with that area. Following COVID-19 and following the attempt to take over a peaceful Black Lives Matter rally, what has the outreach to our minority community been? How has the outreach been working over the summer and since May of last year?

**Doug Thornley:**

I would never call the outreach on the public safety side from the police department a renewed focus; it is something they have been working on for at least a decade. The police chief and his executive team have been out in the community. They have been holding many conversations with our minority communities, the City of Sparks, and the sheriff's office. They have been making a coordinated outreach effort to improve those relationships and talk about steps that we can take to make for a more inclusive community. That is something that is on my radar screen. As soon as it is safer for us to be getting out there, it is going to be a focus of mine. There are conversations that we need to have. There are conversations that we need to continue to have as the profession of police work goes through this sea change that we are witnesses to.

In terms of COVID-19 relief, we have been monitoring our outreach with minority populations. Every week, I get a report from our neighborhood services folk. We monitor for test positivity, testing access, and things of that nature by ZIP Code. We make sure that we are getting that message out. We have made a push to make sure that all messaging, all signage, and all manner of outreach are available in English and Spanish. We are continuing to prioritize those populations that might not otherwise have had access or been informed of the opportunities that are available to them. That is a focus of ours in COVID-19 relief efforts.

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

I am very proud to be from Sparks, but I am excited to hear about the work that both cities are doing together to try to help everybody.

**Assemblyman Matthews:**

I have a question about page 14, where you have the pie chart showing revenue sources for the 2021 fiscal year budget. I want to ask about business licenses and the revenue from that. Could you provide a bit of context in terms of the economic shutdown and the impact? How has that impacted business license revenue? Do these numbers represent a downswing? Is it a recovery phase? Could we get that number in context with the pandemic?

**Doug Thornley:**

Business licenses and permits are down. Our permit valuation is up, but the permit numbers are down. Business licenses are a self-correcting revenue stream. When businesses do not make money, we do not collect business license revenue. It is a staggered collection based on gross receipts. It is down, but it is not down catastrophically. I do not have an exact

percentage or dollar figure at this moment. We have spent a tremendous amount of money and made a tremendous effort to keep people working and keep people working safe. We are in a space where we are moving forward.

**Assemblyman Ellison:**

Senate Bill 73 authorizes a ballot initiative to provide funding for parks, recreation, open space, and natural resources. Is this a sales tax or is that property tax ad valorem?

**Doug Thornley:**

In general, what that bill does is request permission to convene a committee to study the options and then ask for the Board of County Commissioners to place a question on a ballot. While sales tax is included in that list, the best way to think about it is what you would have seen through Washoe County, Ballot Question WC-1, when we did the school capital funding. This is a first step in a much longer process.

**Assemblyman Ellison:**

Is there any hope of bringing back some of these special events that make Reno great, like the car shows, concerts, and the air races? Is that on hold for this year?

**Doug Thornley:**

I would not say that it is on hold. Our focus is making sure that we bring it back in a manner that is safe for all participants. We are just as excited as you, as Sparks, and as anyone who participates in those events. We would love to have them back in as short a time period as we possibly can. Our number one priority is the safety of the community and making sure that we do not slide backwards in our fight against the pandemic.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

Could you talk a little bit about the testing and vaccination efforts for the homeless population? I know you talked a little bit about the Governor's Bowl but could you elaborate on that a little more?

**Doug Thornley:**

We have been down on the river. We spent over \$2 million to expand testing capabilities in Washoe County. We have contracted with Walgreens. We have bought up all of their capacity to test and we have made it free to all of the citizens in Washoe County. All they have to do is make an appointment. They show up, they get tested, and they have their results in just a few hours. Our hospital and medical partners have been grinding away and doing what they can to increase their capacities. We have been communicating those opportunities and making sure that people have access to those resources.

Vaccination is more challenging and is a more pressing issue at the moment. All of that comes down to inventory. When we get it in, we are able to push it out, in conjunction with the Governor's tiers, his lanes, and the tiers within the lanes. That is largely held up by inventory. As we get into those populations that are part of the public and not specifically

identified in those tiers and lanes, we will be pushing out that communication effort. We will be making sure that folks know where the central locations are to get those vaccinations and when the days and times are available to get those shots in their arms.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

This is one of the barriers that is coming to my mind. If I were homeless, I might not have access to the technology necessary to call to schedule an appointment for a vaccination or to get tested. I am probably not going to have access to computers to do that, as well. What is the city doing to accommodate special populations that might not have that access? Are there partnerships being created with local nonprofits or organizations? Is that something that would be considered in the future?

**Doug Thornley:**

We are running into that problem with a multitude of vulnerable populations. We lean heavily on the nonprofit world, particularly as it relates to our unsheltered populations. We are working on identifying a central location, whether that is a fire station or some other point in the community. We are working on getting information into folks' hands so that they can go there or place a simple phone call and get on a list to be vaccinated. That issue is not unique to the unsheltered population. It is something that is on our radar screen. It is something that we are working through, in terms of what is the best and most efficient way to get our arms around all of those populations and get them on a list to get vaccinated.

**Chair Flores:**

I have a question to follow up on a topic that was previously brought up. There have been some members of the Nevada Hispanic Legislative Caucus who have been on a task force to try to identify the concerns we have had with COVID-19 and getting information to the community. I know that having that information in Spanish has been crucial, and at times, difficult to do. You mentioned that you are putting a lot of that information out there in Spanish. Is that something you are contracting out? Do you have somebody in-house doing that?

**Doug Thornley:**

We have been handling communications, as it relates to the pandemic, through the Regional Information Center. We have been coordinating messaging with our partners in Washoe County, Sparks, and the Washoe County Health District.

In Reno, we have a person who is an independent contractor. She translates all of our work into Spanish and makes sure it is accurate and is pushed out into the community. The broader communications plan with our other groups included translation into Spanish from the get-go. We are not alone in the endeavor. In Reno, we focus on making sure all of our communications are available in English and Spanish.



**Chair Flores:**

Thank you both for the presentation. We look forward to working alongside of you as the session progresses. Please reach out with any questions. Members, please make sure you utilize them as a resource. With that, we are going to close the presentation from the City of Reno.

We would like to invite Ms. King from Clark County. We are going to open the presentation from Clark County. Good morning and welcome.

**Joanna Jacob, Government Affairs Manager, Clark County:**

I am going to share my screen before Manager King delivers the presentation.

**Yolanda King, County Manager, Clark County:**

Joining me today, as part of this presentation, I have our chief financial officer, Jessica Colvin; our assistant county manager, Kevin Schiller; and our government affairs manager, Joanna Jacob [page 1, [Exhibit D](#)].

I want to briefly cover the governance structure for Clark County [page 2]. It is a commission/county manager form of government. It includes seven commissioners who are elected on a partisan basis. These seven elected commissioners hire a county manager who is responsible for day-to-day operations of the organization and serves at the pleasure of the board. The seven county commissioners cover a geographical area of 8,000-plus square miles, which spans from the Utah, Arizona, and California state lines, as well as the Nye County line. The seven represented commissioners are noted on this slide [page 2] and their names are listed from left to right. The governance structure for Clark County includes other elected officials: recorder, treasurer, assessor, constables, and the sheriff's office. We are structured under *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) Chapter 244. There are also various county codes that dictate what the policy and structure are for the county.

The community of Clark County [page 3] includes 14 unincorporated towns. That includes urban and rural areas. We include five incorporated cities within Clark County, with a population of 2.3 million residents. It is the most populous county in the state of Nevada with over 75 percent of residents residing in Clark County. By population, it is the thirteenth-largest county in the United States.

This map [page 4] shows an aerial view of Clark County. It includes the incorporated areas, the cities, and the unincorporated areas. It is important to note that the large amount of area that is unincorporated is noted in the yellow-shaded areas. The remaining colored areas represent the incorporated cities. I wanted to give you an aerial view of how much of Clark County does include unincorporated areas.

The Clark County population [page 5] is represented by five cities and an unincorporated area. There are a little more than 1 million residents, 45 percent of the Clark County population, that reside in unincorporated areas of the county. If the unincorporated areas were incorporated into a city, Clark County would be the largest populated city in Nevada

and the eleventh-largest in the nation. Unincorporated areas are important to note because Clark County is the jurisdiction responsible for providing those municipal-like services to the residents who live in an unincorporated area. The incorporated area, the cities, are responsible for providing services to those residents who live within those cities.

Continuing on with the overview of Clark County, this slide [page 6, [Exhibit D](#)] shows that county commissioners serve as governing bodies for several boards and districts. Those are noted on the right-hand side of the screen.

Clark County's economic drivers [page 7] include tourism and gaming. Clark County is one of the top convention destinations in the world. Prior to the pandemic, our county was the number one trade show destination in North America for 24 consecutive years. In 2019, Clark County attracted over 42 million tourists to our valley. As we all know, it is home to the world-famous Las Vegas Strip. It includes a room inventory of over 160,000 rooms. It also includes 17 of the 20 largest hotels in the United States, and 11 of the 20 largest hotels in the world.

This is a quick overview [page 8] of the Clark County organization and how we are formed as a government. As I mentioned, we have the county commissioners. It is a commission/county manager form of government. This organizational chart represents over 38 departments which operate on a day-to-day basis and maintain 10,000-plus employees.

In a presentation that was provided by the Nevada Association of Counties to this Committee, it was noted that every Nevadan is a county resident. Every southern Nevada resident is a Clark County resident. The counties in Nevada all provide regional and municipal services [page 9]. In addition to providing those regional and municipal services to our residents, Clark County may also extend those services to visitors who come into our community on a regular basis. Municipal services are provided to more than one million residents. Our regional services are typically county human services or social safety-net types of services. They are provided to everyone in Clark County, regardless if they live in a city or unincorporated area. This chart [page 9] illustrates departments and divides them into the types of services they are responsible for providing. Departments listed on the left-hand side are the departments that provide regional services to all 2.3 million residents. The departments listed on the right-hand side are departments that are responsible for providing municipal services to more than one million residents who live in unincorporated areas of Clark County.

We have listed [page 10] the Clark County general fund revenue framework. The taxing authority for a significant portion of the revenues that are collected by the Clark County general fund are governed by the state Legislature. Any changes to property taxes or consolidated taxes all require a legislative change. For much of what we collect, the taxing authority lies with the Nevada Legislature.

This is a brief overview of the county financials [page 11, [Exhibit D](#)]. The county's annual budget for fiscal year 2021 is \$9.1 billion. That includes all 38 departments, as well as other agencies that are listed on the slide, like the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, McCarran Airport, and the University Medical Center. A significant portion of the \$9.1 billion budget is nondiscretionary, meaning that much of the money that is collected from various funds is collected for a specific reason. The money must be spent on those specific purposes, as mandated by the state or federal requirements. The general fund budget is a discretionary fund. It is the general operating fund of the county. The general fund budget is \$1.4 billion, approximately 15 percent of the total budget, and a significant portion of the regional and municipal services are accounted for in our general fund budget. In addition to that, many of the department budgets are included in the general fund. Any payments out to jurisdictions for which we are responsible for providing funding also come out of the county general fund. Discussions going forward will focus on the general fund, since that is our general operating fund of the county.

These are the general fund revenues [page 12] that are collected by the county. For fiscal year 2021, the general fund revenues total \$1.3 billion. The largest revenue source for the county general fund comes from property tax revenue at 39 percent. The second-largest revenue is consolidated taxes. These are primarily made up of sales tax collections and that is at 36 percent. Based on the decline in sales tax revenue, property tax and consolidated taxes have essentially traded places. For a long period of time, the consolidated tax collected in our general fund was our largest revenue source. Based on the decline of the revenues in the consolidated tax, we have property tax as our number one largest source of revenue coming into the general fund for the fiscal year 2021 budget.

In 2019, our room tax collections fell dramatically because of the pandemic. Although the county general fund amount of room taxes collected in this fund is insignificant, most of our room tax revenues that are collected are in other non-general funds. For Clark County, room tax collections were \$720 million in 2019. A great deal of that amount, 35 percent, was allocated to the Clark County School District. We have been and are experiencing, to date, a decline of 64 percent of our room tax collection. At some point, the decline of room taxes and the continuation of that decline may impact our county general fund, as well as other funds, because the county is responsible for the \$2 billion in outstanding bonds that are paid with room taxes. It is important to note that the bonds that are paid for by room tax dollars or revenues are general obligation bonds backed by the county. We are paying close attention to what that looked like, because we do not want to get into a situation where the county is having to pay for debt service related to those bonds that are backed by the county.

This pie chart [page 13] illustrates the general fund expenditures. Clark County general fund expenditures are budgeted for \$1.4 billion. Fifty percent of those expenditures are budgeted towards the public safety function. Fifty percent of the public safety function includes two slices that are shown on the pie chart. The public safety function is 16.4 percent and includes departments such as juvenile justice and family services. There is a separate slice for which the county is responsible for providing funds to

the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (Metro) and the Clark County Detention Center. Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is responsible for providing those policing services to the residents within the unincorporated Clark County area. They also provide services to the residents of the City of Las Vegas. Clark County and the City of Las Vegas are responsible for sharing in Metro's expenditures. Clark County pays roughly about 60 percent of Metro's budget. Clark County is responsible for paying 100 percent of the expenditures for the Clark County Detention Center. As I noted earlier, there are other jurisdictions that provide the subsidy to the University Medical Center. Some intergovernmental transfer payments are paid to the state for state match of Medicaid funding that comes back down to the University Medical Center.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a dramatic decline in our consolidated revenues [page 14, [Exhibit D](#)]. It is estimated that we will experience about \$139 million less in consolidated tax revenues over the next three years.

I would like to switch course and talk about what Clark County has done with regard to the public health response [page 15]. The Southern Nevada Health District is the designated lead agency for addressing the pandemic in Clark County. Clark County has partnered with the Southern Nevada Health District and we quickly activated our multiagency coordinating council. That was a framework we had set up during the 1 October incident.

I would like to focus on what Clark County's response has been to the pandemic. Keep in mind, this has been working hand-in-hand in partnership with the Southern Nevada Health District. Clark County received \$295 million in direct Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. Given that the county is the social safety net for residents in Clark County, early on, the Board of County Commissioners set a budget and prioritized the expenditure of these funds. The prioritization for the board was to make sure as much of the funds that were received by the county were dedicated to our residents, particularly in the human services expenses.

This chart [page 16] shows that as of December 30, 2020, we had spent \$275 million of the \$295 million that was received by the county. Over 46 percent was dedicated to human services. As part of the human services category, payments included housing and utility assistance; basic needs assistance, including addressing food insecurities; emergency shelter programs; and programming for financial support for working families to assist with distance learning. Of the \$295 million directly received by the county, we were on track to spend the full \$295 million by the end of December 2020. However, we did receive additional funding, and the deadline for this set of CARES money was extended. I want to make a special note of all the programs that are listed on this chart. Roughly about \$10 million of the \$295 million that was received by Clark County was used for payroll, salary, and benefit reimbursements for our county payroll. The majority of the dollars that we received did go to assist the community.

The next three slides [pages 17, 18, and 19] demonstrate some of the outcomes that were achieved with the use of the CARES funding. Clark County, in coordination with Southern Nevada Health District, stood up community-wide testing [page 17, [Exhibit D](#)]. We staffed those sites and administered close to 500,000 tests. To help expand the testing capacity in Clark County, we paid for 242,000 tests that were administered. The most notable achievement with these funds is in the middle column. The funds were provided to set up a testing lab at the University Medical Center. University Medical Center's testing lab was built with the capacity to process over 10,000 tests per day. The lab supported not only urban hospitals, but also some of our rural hospitals, even one outside of Clark County. In the last column, the CARES funding was also used to provide support to our small businesses within the county. We offered three types of grant programs that included rental assistance, business stabilization, and retrofitting grants. There was outreach provided to over 3,000 small businesses. We provided legal services to over 700 businesses. That was in partnership with the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada. Grants were awarded to our urban, Latin, and Asian chambers of commerce. There were 1,100 rental assistance retrofit and stabilization grants that were directly provided to our small businesses in Clark County.

When we talk about our human services [page 18], with regard to housing assistance, Clark County provided over 16,000 households with rental assistance and over 63,000 utility payments were paid. Clark County also stood up a Hispanic outreach campaign, *Está En Tus Manos*, that reached over 30 million views. We are moving forward with that same campaign to have the Hispanic outreach on the vaccination side of the house.

The middle column [page 18] is funding to assist with providing basic needs, such as food assistance, utility assistance, and child care assistance. That was provided through the partnership with 34 nonprofit providers. Over two million meals were provided to individuals and households. Behavior and substance abuse counseling services were provided to over 5,900 individuals.

In the last box, we have our congregate care. Group housing was also provided. In partnership with the City of Las Vegas, we stood up an ISO-Q, or isolation quarantine center. That was provided for our homeless population to be able to quarantine. It was also used to house the homeless population where the capacity was greatly reduced in areas where nonprofit facilities no longer had the capacity to house the homeless population.

I wanted to point out that Clark County stood up our School Daze Distance Learning Program [page 19], which assisted over 900 families in the county by providing recreational center sites to provide learning programs to assist working families with distance learning. To offset the cost for the families enrolled in the School Daze Distance Learning Program, the county provided financial assistance for those who qualified under the Clark County School District's free and reduced lunch program. We provided financial assistance to our working foster families so that they could send some of our foster children to the School Daze Distance Learning Program.

In the middle column [page 19, [Exhibit D](#)] are the additional emergency leasing and shelter services that were needed for our families. For instance, you may have had a situation where someone tested positive but did not require hospitalization. Those individuals or families needed sheltering. In some cases, you had individuals that were living in the same household and one member tested positive. We needed to be able to address isolating that family member outside of their home to prevent additional spread of the virus within the household. We provided emergency leasing and sheltering services to our homeless individuals. Early on in the pandemic, it was brought up that we needed to provide shelter for our tourists. Prior to the shutdown, and even after the shutdown, as we began to open, if we had tourists that tested positive, they were not able to go back to their hotel site. They were most likely not able to get on a plane and go back home. We needed to provide sheltering on an emergency basis for our tourists that came into our community.

The last column [page 19] shows that Clark County provided subawards to all of the cities, except the City of Las Vegas; they received their own direct funding of CARES dollars. At a high level, this highlights how those cities spent those subawards.

This is what we are looking at going forward [page 20] with regard to any federal funds that are received to address the pandemic. Clark County originally received \$295 million in CARES funding. We spent \$275 million by the end of December. We had about \$20 million remaining. The intent was to use those dollars for our housing assistance program. You may have heard of the CHAP housing program, the CARES Housing Assistance Program. The remaining dollars of the first tranche of federal funding under the CARES program will be used for housing assistance. In 2020, the federal government passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act to provide additional rental assistance to the state, Clark County, and the cities. Approximately \$162 million will be provided from Clark County, as well as the various other cities, and we will be moving forward to provide funding for rental assistance.

I think it is important to note that with the first allocation of CARES money, we ended the year with over 12,000 applicants in the queue [page 21]. We were able to process the applications prior to the end of December 30, 2020. However, at the end of the year there were still over 12,000 rental assistance applications remaining in the queue. Since January 1, 2021, an additional 8,000 households have applied for rental assistance, or about 1,000 applications per week. In partnership with the cities, we plan to combine all of the dollars that we received under the Consolidated Appropriations Act and apply the \$162 million allocation for rental assistance. We estimate that the \$162 million allocation will address the 20,000 rental assistance applications that are currently in the queue. We will be able to provide an additional 20,000 applications that are anticipated to fill up the queue. In total, the \$162 million would be able to provide assistance for close to 40,000 households.



Chair Flores, I do not anticipate going over these next slides [pages 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25] unless there are questions. I did want to point out that the County does have four legislative bills [page 24]. If you or any of the Committee members have any specific questions related to those legislative bills, Joanna Jacob is available to answer questions. I did not want to get into any details unless it was at the pleasure of the Committee.

That concludes my presentation for today. I am open to any questions that you or the Committee may have. Thank you.

**Chair Flores:**

I ask that we refrain from asking any questions related to any particular piece of legislation. We will have an opportunity to vet that at a later time. Any other question is fair game. I know that it is such a broad presentation, but we will do what we can.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

I want to begin by noting that I recognize the important role that Clark County has played in prevention and response to COVID-19. I have seen the work that our county employees and the public officials are doing to ensure that we are providing information and access to resources, specifically the disbursement of the county grants. I know that has played a phenomenal role in ensuring that our community has food and rental assistance. I really do appreciate the work that you are doing.

My question is specific to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). I think it is the human management system that is used by the county. My understanding is that there is a portion of the HMIS system that requires a social security number. Has there been a push for us to cut the language out of there so there is no longer that requirement for a social security number, but for maybe a cell phone number or some other type of identifying information? It could be easier for individuals. I understand that there may be a reason behind that. State grants do not require an individual to have a social security number to receive them. There are many families who might not be comfortable sharing that information with the county. Has there been any push for us to eliminate that and train organizations so that it is no longer a part of the process of receiving assistance?

**Yolanda King:**

I would like to ask Kevin Schiller, our assistant county manager, to address that question.

**Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager, Clark County:**

Good morning. As we rolled out rental assistance and the nonprofit funds, the HMIS piece has always been an essential piece of how we track. Initially, part of the issue was that, depending on what federal funds we were utilizing pre-CARES, that is where the requirement came from. We were able to eliminate that in the rental assistance component. I would also echo that we are trying to merge our HMIS system into state welfare. We are working with the state right now to create a consolidated effort. To your point, I will use the Hispanic population, the diverse population, *Está En Tu Manos*, as an example. One of the key issues we ran into was the high positivity testing rates and there were a lot of barriers

with regard to access to testing and vaccinations. Through evaluating U.S. Treasury guidance, we have been able to remove those requirements. We will continue to do that as we move forward as more funds come available. We identified that at the onset as a barrier and have continued to address it.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

Am I understanding that the HMIS system is used for other programs as well? While I appreciate that the question has been eliminated from the rental assistance applications, I believe that it would still be a part of other state-funded grants that the county is using. Has there been an initiative to make that more mainstream? If something is a federal grant, that requirement is still there. If it is a state grant, then that requirement and expectation is not there.

**Kevin Schiller:**

To answer your question directly, that is exactly what our information technology staff has been working on. They are working to curtail that to the funding source so that we have flexibility to do so. Since we are on the topic of HMIS, the other piece I would echo is that, with the second allotment of rental assistance funding, the Treasury guidance is more prohibitive in how we can utilize those dollars and eligibility. We have IBM, who has come in to help us with our integration through HMIS so we can support that and eliminate it where it is not needed.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

Do we have a timeline for when the HMIS system should be updated so you can curtail it to the funding source?

**Kevin Schiller:**

It is in process now. We can remove fields in the current structure. That is one of the pieces we are working on with IBM and that support. They are two different programs so that is one of the challenges we have. We are attempting to roll out our new rental assistance program within the week. We are hoping to have HMIS centered around that at the same time. I can give you an update offline so you are linked in.

**Assemblywoman Martinez:**

Ms. King, you touched on the outreach for the Hispanic community about COVID-19. What efforts are being made to reach out to the undocumented community in order for them to get their COVID-19 vaccination? Could you elaborate a little more on that, please?

**Yolanda King:**

I would like to turn this over to Kevin Schiller. I believe that the outreach for the undocumented community has been included. We have not steered away or deviated from the *Está En Tus Manos* campaign. Mr. Schiller can elaborate on that.



**Kevin Schiller:**

To echo Ms. King's comments, *Está En Tus Manos* was very focused on three areas. One was testing, and the second was tied to rental assistance on both ends. We have utilized funding from the original CARES allocation to support the continued marketing campaign that is actively in development and tied to removing those barriers for vaccinations for the undocumented population. There are tiers in terms of how you can be tested. I am sure everyone has heard that. We are actively working with Ericka Aviles and her company for creating the marketing and branding, which will be a little more curtailed to the vaccination. We are also looking at where we can advertise and market that to get down to the grassroots level.

**Assemblywoman Thomas:**

I was looking at the fiscal year 2021's budget [page 12, [Exhibit D](#)] and with the revenue that is projected, 39.1 percent is property tax. My question is dealing with foreclosures. Do we have the numbers for foreclosures at this time? How are they affecting the 39.1 percent of revenue that we are expecting from property tax? Is anything being done for homeowners to keep their homes? I understand that we have rental assistance and that is great. What are we doing for homeowners that contribute to property tax?

**Yolanda King:**

Currently in the community, in terms of foreclosure, we are not seeing it as an issue. This is not to say that going forward we will not see what the effect of that looks like. This generally lags. We thought that a year later we would start to see what that looks like, but we have not experienced a high level of foreclosure in the community. The first CARES allocation included assistance for mortgage assistance, but this is not the case with the Consolidated Appropriations Act money that we will be receiving. Those monies are dedicated to rental assistance. In the first tranche of federal monies, we were able to assist and address the mortgage side of it, not just rental assistance. Moving forward, that will absolutely have to be something that we monitor closely. It will generally lag, and it is not to say that we will not see or have those issues later as we start to see homeowners not be able to afford their mortgages.

We are also paying close attention to the revenue source of property taxes. We are anticipating that the lag in the receipt and the reduction of property tax revenue that we will see going into the fiscal year 2022 budget would be values declining on the commercial side. We have not and did not see a significant decline in the assessed valuation on the residential nor on the commercial side. Going into fiscal year 2022, we are not anticipating a decline on the estimated revenues for property taxes. Right now, we are going through the appeal process for assessed valuations on the residential and commercial side. We had initially anticipated receiving tens of thousands of appeals, much like what we saw in the Great Recession. We did not see the number of appeals that were anticipated. Property owners did not dispute what their value was. I think that is related to not having a significant drop at all. The assessed values have increased or have been anticipated to increase on the property tax side.

I hope that answers other questions. It is still kind of up in the air with regard to the assistance that may be needed in the future. We will work through what that looks like for our community if we start to see an increase in foreclosures. Hopefully, there will be some federal assistance provided to assist those families.

**Assemblywoman Thomas:**

Ms. King, I want to be reassured that you will let this body know what those numbers look like within the next three to six months. I am really concerned. If people needed rental assistance, I would think that homeowners are in the same predicament. We really need the numbers to see what we can do to assist these homeowners. I really do not want to wait and be like the Great Recession. It caught a lot of people by surprise, and then we were in cleanup mode. I appreciate your explanation and assurance. It does give me room to relax a bit. If you could keep us abreast of data as you get it, I would appreciate that.

**Assemblywoman Considine:**

As an Assembly member who represents mostly unincorporated Clark County, I really appreciate all of this. I would like to ask a question about the bonds. Early on, you mentioned that if the room taxes do not cover the bonds, then Clark County would be responsible to pay on those bonds. Is there a list on what those bonds cover? If it comes to the point where room taxes do not cover what needs to be paid on those, which ones are recoverable?

**Yolanda King:**

Based on the county's credit, we issue bonds on behalf of the major revenue. We have issued bonds for the Las Vegas Convention Center Authority. We have also issued for projects that occur on the Las Vegas Strip. One of the largest of the outstanding bonds would include the Las Vegas Stadium Authority. Recently, we have had to utilize some of the reserve funds with the stadium bonds to make the debt service payment.

When we issue bonds, we try to make sure that we have more than 1 or 1 1/2 times coverage for instances like this where there might be a significant decline in revenue. We try to make sure that our funds or reserved funds include funding so if the revenues decline, we are able to provide debt service payment to weather the storm. Those are the three main sources for which the \$2 billion-plus in bonds have been allocated; the Las Vegas Convention Center Authority; transportation projects on the Las Vegas Strip; and the stadium bonds. We are paying close attention to having the additional coverage, as well as the reserve funds, to help us weather through this.

If this continues longer, extended into the future, we are going to have some issues to face because the reserves will be depleted. We may not have the coverage we initially anticipated. What that looks like for the community is that the county general fund would have to pay back the debt service. We would not have the ability to pay for the debt service payments for all of these outstanding bonds. That could possibly mean a property tax

increase to our residents in southern Nevada. We are going to do everything possible to avoid that situation. If there is a property tax increase in order to pay for debt service payments, they are not limited to the property tax cap; they would be at the full value of what the property tax imposed to be able to pay for that debt service.

**Assemblywoman Considine:**

If it does go that far and the property taxes are raised or money is taken out of the general fund, are there any provisions later down the line? When everyone is in better shape economically, will that money be recoverable and returned to the general fund or offset for property taxes in some way?

**Yolanda King:**

We would take a look at that. Wherever we can try to replenish those funds, we would try to do that where the situations are. Our very last resort would be to increase taxes to our property owners. We would try to do everything possible before we need to get to that point. At this point, I do not anticipate that we would need to. There is a light at the end of the tunnel in regard to this pandemic.

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

There is a lot of information here. I am going to continue on with the money area. I am looking at slide 10 [page 10] and slide 12 [page 12, [Exhibit D](#)]. I think there was a bill, Senate Bill 463 of the 80th Session, that had to do with the Clark County Coroner's Office being able to increase the amount of money that you are able to charge for a death certificate. Where is that money in the general fund? How is that being accounted for? Who has the oversight for it? How much has this generated since this bill came through? I realized those are very specific things. I wanted to get that in the room for fund discussion.

**Yolanda King:**

I believe that S.B. 463 of the 80th Session was passed last session. It included a \$3 increase that was stacked onto and collected on the death certificates. The bill allowed for the purpose of the use of those funds. The use of those funds was expanded to include expenditures that were related to mass casualties, training, and seminars. It was also allowed to be used for some of the programs that we currently have in place; for example, our youth DUI program, Every 15 Minutes. It was also allowed that we could use it to subsidize the existing programs within the Clark County Office of the Coroner.

We are collecting those dollars. There is a \$3 assessment on death certificates by the Southern Nevada Health District. They collect those dollars and turn them over to the county. They are not included as part of the county general fund revenues. These would be considered dollars that are collected for a specific purpose and that purpose is outlined in the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 440.700. We set aside these funds in a separate fund to account for them and to ensure they are used for how NRS 440.700 has outlined for us to use those dollars. You would not see those here on the revenue side in the general fund.

In terms of the amount of dollars that have been generated, I will have to get that information to you. I do not know the exact dollar amount. I can tell you that, to date, we have not spent any of those dollars. We will need to take a look at what has been generated and what we can spend it on. I believe it is permissive language, so we would probably need to take a look at if there is still a use for those dollars.

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

I understand that this is all in the NRS language. Who is overseeing this? Is a report being given to people to make sure that the money is being utilized the way that it was envisioned? Who is ensuring the proper usage? For lack of a better term, what is that outside auditor?

**Yolanda King:**

Clark County oversees the expenditure of those funds, just as any of our funds within our county coffers. Any expenditures related to those funds go through an audit process through our budget office and our comptroller office. We are well aware of how those dollars can be used and spent. Any expenditure that occurs out of those funds or any funds of the county is our responsibility. The Clark County Department of Finance ensures that we are spending those dollars appropriately. It would be the county who oversees. The county finance department is responsible for making sure that it is spent accordingly. To my knowledge, and I will follow up with you on this, I do not believe that there is any report that is provided to any group of people in terms of the dollar expenditures. As I mentioned before, we have not had any expenditures out of this fund to be able to report the expenses and how they have been paid.

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

I would like to see a report on how exactly the money is being utilized. I realize that it is the county oversight. But since this is a brand new law with brand new information, it is something that we need to be looking at. We need to be looking at whether or not the money is being utilized the way it was envisioned.

**Assemblywoman Considine:**

My question has to do with the Clark County Wetlands Park. Last week or the week before, there was another fire in the Clark County Wetlands Park. It seems like there have been a handful of those in the past few years. Are there entities, like the Clark County Water Reclamation District, or any districts, that are getting together to discuss fire suppression to protect the wetlands or find out why we are having fires there?

**Yolanda King:**

I will need to follow up with you on that. Most of the fires that occur within the area are federal jurisdiction. There is a federal jurisdiction that comes in to combat the fires that are occurring there. I will need to follow up in terms of if we have a coordinated effort to determine the cause of the fires and if there is anything for prevention purposes that we can do in Clark County and at the federal level.

**Chair Flores:**

Members, do we have any additional questions? [There were none.] I want to thank you for the presentation. I encourage you to follow up. I know you will get the answers to a series of questions for us. Please make sure you send it to the whole Committee. If you send it to our committee manager, Ms. Judith Bishop, she will be sure to get that information to all of the members. Again, thank you for the presentation and we are looking forward to working alongside of you for the remainder of the session. Members, reach out to them if you have any questions.

At this time, I would like to close out the presentation from Clark County. I would like to open it up to public comment.

**Annemarie Grant, Private Citizen, Quincy, Massachusetts:**

My brother, Thomas Purdy, was 38 years old when he was asphyxiated to death by the Washoe County Sheriff's Office on October 4, 2015. We took him off life support on October 8, 2015. My brother was a guest at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino in Reno when he had a mental health crisis and asked security for help. Security called the Reno Police Department. The Reno police hog-tied my brother in a Ripp Hobble restraint. On every page of the manual, it says to never use this to hog-tie a human being, let alone for 40 minutes. The entire time, they kept my brother facedown. While he was hog-tied with a knee in his back, Reno police filled out their paperwork.

Forty minutes later, they dumped him at the jail, still hog-tied. The sergeant thought my brother was acting so strange. They told us my brother was talking crazy and not making any sense. In reality, when we finally got the video, my brother was begging for his life while hog-tied, telling them he was going to die. He was telling them that he could not breathe. He was telling them he had had major lung surgery. It took us months to find out the actual truth.

The Sparks Police came to the hospital, just to get us in our grief and try to garner information out of us to use against my brother and justify their murder of my brother. The jail went on to kill another man after my brother, Justin Thompson. They asphyxiated a man before my brother, Niko Smith.

I was at the jail this past summer with my 12-year-old nephew, 19-year-old son, and my brother, Daniel. We were holding a banner for my brother. One of the cops came up. They surrounded us. One of them kept his hand on his gun the entire time.

I know my time is almost up. I just wanted to say please do not support bills that protect bad officers. Please support bills that promote transparency and accountability. Thank you.

**Chair Flores:**

We are very sorry to hear that happened to your family member. Thank you for joining us this morning. [There were no more callers.] I am going to close out public comment.

Ms. King, I believe you are still on. I want to apologize. I accidentally skipped Assemblywoman Brown-May. She did have a question. We can open up the presentation from Clark County.

**Assemblywoman Brown-May:**

I do have a couple of questions relative to the outreach that has been happening across our very diverse community. The district that I represent is in unincorporated Clark County. First, I want to acknowledge the sheer magnitude of the emergency that everyone has faced over the course of the last year and the efforts that have been put forth by many members of the county.

My district is most concerned about evictions and having access to COVID-19 vaccinations. I think it is more about those who are not utilizing English as a first or primary language. We heard you talk a little bit about outreach to the Spanish-speaking community. We know that there was some difficulty in how that was initiated throughout the county at the onset of the pandemic. Your team talked about marketing and outreach efforts and how we are improving on that to get to a grassroots level, but could you give us a little bit of detail about how we are reaching a broad-based population? I mean people who may not be speaking Spanish or may need special access: specifically, those who are blind, visually impaired, or people of the deaf community. How are we reaching other languages besides English?

**Yolanda King:**

I believe Kevin Schiller is still on. I will turn it over to Mr. Schiller.

**Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager, Clark County:**

I want to highlight a couple of pieces that I did not talk about in my previous answer. One is the Hispanic outreach and where we started with that. That was driven based on looking at our testing positivity rate in other areas. That was done in a degree of chaos at the onset. You kind of echoed that. The other piece I would echo is CARES. I am going to call it the CARES 1.0 funding. Those Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) were pretty flexible in terms of how we could utilize those dollars. The second round is more tied to rental assistance and we do not have the flexibility of those dollars. Through Ms. King, we have been able to utilize some of those flexible dollars in the first allotment to support that marketing and outreach.

We are directly coordinating with the Southern Nevada Health District, specific to our marketing campaign currently in development, on vaccinations tied to those areas. It is not just specific to the Hispanic community, but also the African-American population, in conjunction with looking at others who have barriers to access. To give you an example, we are currently exploring mass vaccination sites and implementing that across the region through the use of some of the local churches and congregations. We are looking at how to use that through an ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990] process and in terms of those populations that have difficulties.

It is complex, but that is incorporated. We are trying to look across all populations, both from a diversity perspective and a disability perspective. We recognize how significant that is. I would echo that it is a little limiting because we do not have funds allocated to support marketing through the second allotment. We are trying to do the best we can to be inclusive with the dollars that we have. We recognize that without the vaccinations, it is going to clearly impact our ability to recover.

**Assemblywoman Brown-May:**

I appreciate the efforts of the county to reach this broad population that we have. There are many folks. My email inbox is filled up from people who are very concerned about where to go to get the appropriate information, especially with regard to evictions and vaccinations. I feel like we can continue to focus in that way to make people feel as though they have access. I think the better our communication strategy is, the better our residents will be.

**Chair Flores:**

I just wanted to make sure I did not miss anybody else. [There was no one.] Again, Clark County, thank you for coming back. With that, I will close out the presentation by Clark County.

Members, I want to remind you that we will continue with our presentations tomorrow. We will be having a presentation by the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. On Thursday, we will be having some bill presentations. Make sure you give yourself an opportunity to read those bills and review what may be necessary so that you are prepared with questions for tomorrow. This meeting is adjourned [at 10:39 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Kyla Beecher  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## **EXHIBITS**

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "City of Reno Overview Presentation," dated February 23, 2021, submitted and presented by Doug Thornley, City Manager, City of Reno; and Calli Wilsey, Senior Management Analyst, Intergovernmental Relations, City of Reno.

[Exhibit D](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Welcome to a Resilient Community: Clark County Nevada," submitted and presented by Yolanda King, County Manager, Clark County.