MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Eighty-Third Session
February 6, 2025

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Venicia Considine at 8:04 a.m. on Thursday, February 6, 2025, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 2 of the State of Nevada Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, 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/83rd2025.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Venicia Considine, Chair
Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Max E. Carter II
Assemblymember Rich DeLong
Assemblymember Reuben D'Silva
Assemblymember Rebecca Edgeworth
Assemblymember Tanya P. Flanagan
Assemblymember Danielle Gallant
Assemblymember Heather Goulding
Assemblymember Bert K. Gurr
Assemblymember Linda F. Hunt
Assemblymember Jovan A. Jackson
Assemblymember Venise Karris

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblymember Heidi Kasama (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alex Drozdoff, Committee Policy Analyst
Sarah Delap, Committee Counsel
Judi Bishop, Committee Manager
Karri Hurwitz, Committee Secretary
Mary Whalen, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Shelley Berkley, Mayor, City of Las Vegas
Sabra Newby, Deputy City Manager, City of Las Vegas
Kelly McNeil, Executive Director, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities
Mary L. Devine, Director, Department of Veterans Services

Chair Considine:
[Roll was taken. Committee Rules and protocol were explained.] Today we will hear three presentations. We will begin with the presentation from the City of Las Vegas, followed by a presentation from the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities. We will conclude with a presentation from the Nevada Department of Veterans Services. City of Las Vegas, if you would like to step up. Joining us is Mayor Shelley Berkley and Randy Robison, Government and Community Affairs Director, in Las Vegas. We also have Sabra Newby, Deputy City Manager, and Kelly Crompton, Government Affairs Manager, here in Carson City.

Shelley Berkley, Mayor, City of Las Vegas:
Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today regarding the issues that are confronting the fabulous city of Las Vegas. My name is Shelley Berkley. I am very honored to be the mayor of my hometown, Las Vegas. In my previous elected role, I had the pleasure of coming up every year and addressing the Legislature. Much prior to that, I was a member of the Legislature back in 1983. I feel like I am coming full circle, being able to interact with you again. I became the mayor of Las Vegas 61 days ago. I have been in office now for a day over a month. It is like drinking from a fire hose. I am learning a lot and I am enjoying every minute of it. I had the opportunity to go through what I have been calling mayor school, where I have been meeting with all the department heads in the city, finding out what they do, how they interact with our constituents, and how they interact with the mayor's office. It has been quite a learning curve and very, very enjoyable.

Now, to the challenges that confront us in the City of Las Vegas. I do not think anything I will share with you is particularly unique or surprising, but we should put it on the record before we proceed. Las Vegas is in a very unique period in our history. Unlike most other jurisdictions in southern Nevada, the city is landlocked, meaning we are nearly out of available, developable land to grow out. We must focus so much more intentionally on growing up. I do not mean aging. I mean growing up from the ground. We are becoming increasingly urbanized. We are increasingly dealing with the challenges common to urban cities: homelessness, economic development, diversification, good jobs, housing supply and

affordability, and building new and maintaining existing infrastructure. The list goes on, of course. As we work every day to find effective and sustainable solutions, we know that ultimate success depends on collaboration and partnership locally, regionally, and even nationally.

In combination with our local partners, one of the most important partners is you, our State Legislature. Local elected officials and state elected officials; we all represent the same constituents. I can tell you from my many years in office—Congress, Board of Regents, the Nevada State Assembly, and even from my few weeks in the mayor's office—a constituent does not care who solves their problem. They just want it solved. That is why it is imperative that we continually get better and better at working together to serve our shared constituents. Believe me when I say I truly look forward to working with all of you. Having been one of you at a period of time in my public service, I know the challenges that you have, and the extraordinary efforts that you make every day on behalf of the people you represent.

Before I conclude, let me say I am looking forward to coming up to Carson City to visit with all of you and to talk about the issues that are confronting the city of Las Vegas. We could work collaboratively to solve them. I want to thank you for this opportunity. I am going to turn this over to Sabra Newby, one of our wonderful and capable deputy city managers, and, of course, a former colleague of yours from last session. Please take it away, Ms. Newby.

Sabra Newby, Deputy City Manager, City of Las Vegas:
Thank you, Madam Mayor. My name is Sabra Newby. I am a Deputy City Manager at the City of Las Vegas. With me I have Kelly Crompton, our Government Affairs Manager, who is going to be running the PowerPoint. You just heard from our lovely mayor. I wanted to talk a little bit about our city council. It is a seven-member city council headed by the mayor and six ward representatives, each elected from their own ward [page 2, Exhibit C]. I would like to point out that five of the seven are former members of the esteemed Assembly at the Nevada State Legislature.

We have a council-manager form of government [page 3]. It is not unique across cities, across the United States. It is one in which the voters elect our city council and mayor. Then those elected provide us policy direction, and the day-to-day government management is done by a professional manager. Ours is Mike Janssen and a number of city employees. Some of you have already heard my analogy about the council-manager form of government. It is like a bicycle, where our city council and mayor are like the handlebars that steer us in the direction that they think we should go. The manager and the workers are all like the gears, the pedals, and the wheels that make it go where it needs to go.

The city of Las Vegas is very diverse, and we are very proud of that [page 4]. You can see here our land mass is 142,000 square miles [*sic*]. Our population is almost 670,000. Very diverse, and something that we are very proud of and work to maintain. One of our real stars of our departments is our Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Department [page 5]. We maintain 86 parks that have over 12 million visitors every year. We are really proud of our community centers, and they are very popular. We had over 360,000 visitors to those

in 2024, and we have an older and increasingly older population, 15,000 participants in our adult active fitness classes. We have lots of great events that we all know and love like Helldorado Days, the Vegas Book Festival, and Day of the Dead celebrations.

Where the rubber meets the road, though, is in our Public Works Department. Those are the roads and signals that you see every day. We maintain over 1,000 traffic signals. We are sorry about that, but they do try to keep us safe. We have over 1,300 miles of paved roads, around 61,000 streetlights, and we have water treatment. Obviously, when you flush the toilet, you want it to go somewhere, and you want it to be treated. We treat about 17 billion gallons of wastewater every year.

We like to think that we are very business friendly and business encouraging. I think our stats show that with 4,704 business licenses in 2024, over 3,600 building permits, and over 96,000 building inspections within the city of Las Vegas [page 7].

What is most important to our residents and what is most important to us is public safety [page 8]. You will see later how much of the city's budget really is consumed by public safety. It is the thing that we pride ourselves in. When you are in need, you are going to make that call and someone from the City of Las Vegas or supported by the City of Las Vegas is going to respond. In 2024, our 22 fire stations received more than 100,000 calls for service. In our City Attorney's Office that prosecutes misdemeanors, we prosecuted over 16,000 criminal cases in Las Vegas Municipal Court. We maintained over 23,000 fire hydrants, which we know from the fires in California are an important part of our public safety system but often are unsung heroes.

Our staffing has remained fairly constant in the past several years [page 9]. You will see we have about 3,800 employees. Touching on that public safety theme, the majority of our employees are in the public safety realm at just over 1,500, with culture and recreation being next up in general government. We are proud of our workers. We have three values that we maintain and try every day to live up to. They are to be kind, to be committed, and to be smart. We work every day to fulfill those in everything we do.

Our revenues for fiscal year 2024 are here [page 10]. We saw a gain in consolidated tax. It comprised a larger piece of the pie of our revenues at 56 percent. Property tax came in at second at almost 20 percent of those revenues. “Other” comprises 10 percent, and then licenses and franchise fees at almost 14 percent.

General fund expenditures: we pride ourselves in our public safety [page 11]. Public safety is the greatest single expenditure that we have at just about 63 percent, or $475 million. This is not only our fire department, our marshals, and city attorneys, but it also includes our contribution to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, which you probably know is a service unit that is combined for the city of Las Vegas and unincorporated Clark County.

A question I get a lot is, Sabra, beyond revenues that you get from taxes, fees, and licenses, what about grant funding? Do you go out there and try to get grant funding? Our answer is resoundingly, Yes. We really do try to go out there and supplement our programs with additional grant funds. In fiscal year 2024, we received 45 federal awards at over $77 million [page 12]. Eighty percent of those are noncompetitive. Those are typically your formula-based grants. Those would be your Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), your HOME [Program]. We receive Housing Opportunity for Persons With AIDS. We do receive those funds as we well. We do go after competitive grants, and we are constantly looking for those opportunities. We have a grant team headed up by Ms. Crompton that sends out grant opportunities to our departments when there are things that we could potentially go for.

We also go for nonfederal awards, and they are not as large of a dollar figure, but those are all competitive, those 21 awards. We do go after community project funding also, called Congressionally Directed Spending. We submitted 17 applications in the current fiscal year for the feds. Five of those were in partnership with our local nonprofits. We were able to help them get into the pipeline as well. We believe that we should get nine projects if Congress passes some appropriations bills. Those total $22 million. One of those projects is in partnership with one of our local nonprofits.

Because our city is so diverse, language access is a big issue for us and a big priority for us [page 13, Exhibit C]. I tried to include here some of the high-level things that we do, but there are many more that could not fit on the slide. We know that 12.6 percent of our population identify as limited English proficient. About 80 percent of those are Spanish speakers. We do have a bilingual public information officer. We have a Spanish newsletter. It is not on here, but last year we launched our Spanish language YouTube channel. We have Spanish language events for business incubators in collaboration with UNLV [University of Nevada, Las Vegas], SBDC [Small Business Development Centers], and SBA [Small Business Administration].

In addition, what is the way that folks normally interact with us? It is through our website and through some of the notices that we put out for the public. Because of that, we have translation abilities for seven languages. Also, for planning notices in those seven languages, I looked it up: last year we had over 330,000 times that our website was translated into a language other than English. We know that folks are coming to our website to get those services and information.

One of the important issues for us—a top issue for our mayor, Mayor Berkley—is homelessness [page 14]. We do contribute and do a number of different services in our community, including some of the services that many of you may have toured. The Courtyard Homeless Resource Center is our biggest offering. The Recuperative Care Center is an offering that helps individuals who are experiencing homelessness recover from surgery or an illness once they get out of the hospital. We have a second-chance employment program, the Ticket to Home. The Arrow Transportation Shuttle Service, which is a transportation service. We have three routes that go to areas and offerings that are important

for these folks to get back on their feet, including the Social Security Administration, the DMV [Department of Motor Vehicles], various hospitals, and other services such as VA [United States Department of Veterans Affairs]. This is very important for folks who do not have transportation.

We have the MORE [Multi-Agency Outreach Resources Engagement] teams that are out engaging in the community and encampments. We have five of those along with housing services to both prevent folks from entering homelessness but also to help folks exiting. We provide grant support to many of our nonprofit partners in the community. At our next agenda for the city council, we hope to sign on to the Campus for Hope project with great support from Clark County.

We all know that affordable housing is a huge issue. It is really the pressure that has been, I believe, creating this increase in homelessness and issues in our community. The City is really stepping up and has stepped up in the last couple of years in making this more of a priority for us. Right now, we have an estimated $14 million of investment into projects that are currently planned or underway [page 15]. Those should provide up to hopefully 2,000 affordable housing units. In 2019 through 2023, we invested about $13 million to get about 1,100 units. These units are not fully supported by the city. Typically, these developers would have a stacking funding model firm that would have various sources of funding from various jurisdictions. We are happy to be partners with them and help them close that gap.

One of the things that we are really excited about, and I am personally really excited about, is the Community Land Trust that we are working on right now. If we can get that launched, it not only helps build a shared equity with the homeowners, but also ensures that those units remain affordable into the future.

The City has three bills that we are bringing to the Legislature. I will not go into them in detail because I think two of them, at least, are coming your way. The first one is Senate Bill 28, this is concerning affordable housing [page 16]. It allows cities like Las Vegas to support high-density, transit-oriented projects through existing offerings within the law. This is important because although we talk about the Bureau of Land Management land, this is a great offering and a great opportunity for us to use for affordable housing. Typically, those parcels are on the outskirts of town. What we really need is to get affordable units for folks who are on transit corridors to easily get to schools, medical, and to places and centers of work, rather than being on the outskirts. The other aspect of this is that it expands the use of our permit fee offsets which we currently use for up to 60 percent Area Median Income (AMI), and this would expand that use to up to 120 percent AMI.

The next bill, Senate Bill 48, is essentially applying the same standard and existing language on the consistency standard that set forth in 16 of the 17 counties to Clark County [page 17]. We believe that it aligns our master plan more to the planning process.

Finally, Senate Bill 54; this is for our Recuperative Care Center [page 18]. Currently, the facility is entirely supported by City of Las Vegas general funds. We would like to have the state establish a code for recuperative care for homeless individuals and be able to fund, in part through Medicaid, some of the services provided to these folks who are eligible.

That concludes my presentation. We have a number of folks who are up here full-time. You will see some of them listed here [page 19]. I am always available. I would be happy to take questions, unless Mayor Berkley or Mr. Robison has any comments to add on the presentation.

Shelley Berkley:
Thank you so much, Sabra, for representing the city so well. Madam Chair and members of the Committee, we want to thank you again for the opportunity to talk about the city that I grew up in, that I love, and that I now represent. I believe with all my heart that the next ten years will be explosive in a very positive way for the city and some of the most pivotal and important years in the history of Las Vegas. Working together with you and our local partners, I have no doubt that we will do great things for our city, our state, and for our fellow citizens. We will be very happy to address any questions that you may have.

Chair Considine:
Any questions from the Committee before we get started?

Assemblymember D'Silva:
Good to see you again, Director Newby, and of course our wonderful mayor from Las Vegas, Mayor Berkley. I have a two-part question. One, Senate Bill 28. We have been discussing in the city of Las Vegas about the high-density transit districts and the creation of those development projects. In North Las Vegas, the Agora Realty group has been looking at developing some mid-rises. That is a question that comes up with my own constituency. It is a divisive issue, the actual development of those—building up as opposed to building out. With the land issues in Las Vegas, I think it is something we should be open to. I am wondering, first and foremost, is there going to be some kind of consideration in Senate Bill 28 to create allotments?

Chair Considine:
If we want to talk about specific bills, we want to talk about them when they are in the Committee. If you have additional questions, please reach out to the City.

Assemblymember D'Silva:
The second question has to do with the opportunity zones. This was brought up in the last session. I am wondering if there is consideration from the City to look at expanding the creation of those zones in east Las Vegas. There has been a heavy focus on the westside but looking at having the same sort of opportunity for folks in the eastern part of the city.

Sabra Newby:
The core of your first question was about building mid-rise buildings. It is something that we are considering and cognizant of. Unlike building in new areas where there is pure land, what you are trying to do with infill is among already established neighborhoods. We know that and are cognizant of that. It is a different type of development, but density is something that we need very much. It is something that you have to weigh.

On the opportunity zones, one of the things we are working on the eastside is our Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA), which is a neighborhood revitalization and stabilization. Our NRSA on the eastside is kicking off now. It is something we are planning on and looking to put more resources to. For example, one of the things we are currently in the process of is trying to redevelop the Desert Pines site to include affordable housing. We are calling it EETC [Eastside Education and Training Center] to mirror the one that we have in the historic westside, which is our WETC [Westside Education and Training Center]; same name, just the westside. We are looking to place that on the Desert Pines site. We are also working on a health and wellness center on the eastside that is part of NRSA. That would be in partnership with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) from the Reno area. They would provide primary care. That is on the planning block too.

Shelley Berkley:
Assemblymember, during the time that I was campaigning, I came to realize that there were parts of the city of Las Vegas that were far more developed than others. I took it upon myself to make several commitments in west Las Vegas. Particularly the historic westside and east Las Vegas. The City of Las Vegas will do everything we can in order to develop those areas of our city and give the people who live in those areas better opportunities to enjoy a higher quality of life. I think that is a commitment that the City has made, and I am very supportive of that as mayor. I am hoping that you will actually see tangible results of our commitment and our efforts in the near future.

Assemblymember Carter:
My question has to do with affordable housing. Everybody is talking about affordable housing. Is anything being done to ensure that these properties that all of this work is going into stay as owner-occupied and do not get bought up by conglomerates or by individuals? We have already seen that in one project. My constituents are complaining very loudly that they are already seeing affordable housing up for rent or lease on Marketplace and other things.

Sabra Newby:
Assemblymember Carter, that is a concern of ours. We, like you, see on the news about conglomerations buying up multiple houses. Our housing funding that we usually use in HOME and CDBG carries a period of affordability for us. It requires that those units remain affordable for a certain period of time. We have used, in the past and probably will use in the

future, another option which is to reinvest in some of those properties as they get to the end of the period of affordability—20 years out, for example and they may need some rehabbing or some additional work. We can reinvest in those. When we do that with the federal funds, then we can extend that period of affordability even longer.

One of the things that we were talking about with the Community Housing Land Trust that I talked about earlier is essentially to get homes into this community land trust and make them affordable in perpetuity. What would happen with the community land trust is that the land trust would own the land underneath the home, but the individual or their families who would be qualified would own the structure. As those homes appreciate—this all has to be set up by the land trust—there are different rules that different communities have used. As that appreciates, some of that equity will be kept by the individual or the family that bought the home if they choose to sell. A lot of that equity will be kept by the land trust. It ensures that the property in perpetuity is affordable and is kept affordable. That is one of the tools that we are really looking at.

We have ten properties that are holdovers from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program from the 2008-2009 downturn. It was a federal program that gave funds to local governments to purchase homes that were in foreclosure and to put income-qualified families into them. We have ten of those properties now that we are looking to put into that land trust initially, and we are looking to expand it from there.

I think there are also some policy questions around business licensing that we could explore. We obviously license commercial properties and commercial property owners. It has been something that we have discussed. What is the difference between a commercial owner who owns three or four properties versus 2,000? Should those be treated differently? I would submit, not to put the work back on you, that is probably a policy decision that needs to ultimately be made at our state level.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
I am a proponent of small business owners, as I am a small business owner myself. I love the data that you put here for business development with 4,704 business licenses. I wonder if the City can go into it a little bit further and keep track of how many are first-time business owners, how many are diverse business owners? I think it is important for us as we see how great the City of Las Vegas is doing on language access. I think that is amazing, that you put that in the presentation, and you are leading the efforts throughout the state for the language access plan. I wonder if you do the same thing in the business category, if you keep track of where our demographic is when it comes to the business community?

Sabra Newby:
I do not know that we keep the demographic information on the businesses, but I can certainly check into that for you. I do not know if many of you know my colleague Ramiro Reyes, who is on our team. He goes out there and interacts with business groups, particularly diverse ones, to try to get them the things they need to make the process easier. We will get back to you on that data, because that would be interesting for me as well.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
If you can send it to the entire Committee, that would be awesome.

Assemblymember Jackson:
I would like to talk about Jackson Street and the business development there. I know the art district had a lot of business license opportunities when it first was created. I am hoping to see some type of business opportunities for Jackson Street. I was wondering if there are any plans for the Jackson Street area?

Shelley Berkley:
I could not agree with you more. I grew up in Las Vegas, and we have been talking about developing the historic westside for as long as I can remember. The time has come. I am working very closely with the new city council member from Ward 5. We are committed to working together collectively on behalf of the people who do call the historic westside home. There are a number of events taking place in Jackson Street over the next month. I plan to be at as many of them as possible in order to send a signal that the city of Las Vegas is committed to the development in that area.

Assemblymember Jackson:
I appreciate your initiatives.

Sabra Newby:
We do have a number of things happening on Jackson Street. I would like to shout out that we have our event that Mayor Berkley mentioned upcoming on February 22, Love on Jackson Block Party, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. It is going to be a great event, showing the outreach. We will have information on several of the developments that we are working on in the area.

Chair Considine:
If we can go back to the demographics slide at the beginning [page 4, Exhibit C]. I am familiar with this, but I do not know how many other folks are. You have the outline for the City of Las Vegas, but there are several parcels within that which have their own outlines. Will you explain what that means?

Sabra Newby:
Those are unincorporated Clark County areas. They are what we affectionately call the "donut holes." Those are areas that are not incorporated within the City of Las Vegas. Those are unincorporated county residents, because the city surrounds them. Oftentimes we do provide services to those residents within those areas.

Chair Considine:
My next question is on the staffing. How is the City of Las Vegas doing on staffing? Are you fully staffed? Do you have a lot of openings?

Sabra Newby:
We do have a number of openings right now. We are in a sort of maintaining and recovery mode right now with respect to a case that you might have heard of called the Badlands. We have a settlement that has been agreed to. It is still in process in terms of the outcome. As a result of that, the City is set to put forward about $250 million as part of that settlement. As you might imagine, $250 million is a lot of money in any situation. Because of that, we are looking at and have already begun to hold positions frozen to save money as people leave to recoup some of those funds that we will need to pay out, essentially. As folks leave, we identify whether those positions should be filled. Public safety is not under that freeze. It is a priority for us, public safety positions are not being frozen, but all other positions are certainly scrutinized very heavily and most likely going to be frozen. We also had what we call a voluntary separation program. A number of people took that. Those positions will be frozen for two years as a result of those folks retiring early as a cost-cutting measure.

Chair Considine:
You mentioned public safety on the staffing page [page 9]. You mentioned that public safety encompasses several entities, and you said that included not only the deputy city marshals, it includes the city attorneys. What else do the public safety positions encompass?

Sabra Newby:
I believe it also includes the courts, if I am not mistaken. Fire communications specialists, all the folks . . . fire communications specialists, dispatch, the jail, and correction officers, the COs, would all be in that category as well.

Assemblymember Flanagan:
As you guys plan for the cuts to pay for the $250 million, will there be any hard hits to Parks and Recreation? I know you do a lot of cultural programming, which is really important to our youth and our families. I want to make sure I am clear on how it could affect them.

Sabra Newby:
At this point, our manager and our council have been committed to not doing layoffs. To the extent that we have frozen positions that may occur in Parks, which could be an impact, but we are not looking at cutting, necessarily, any programming. That said, one of the things that we have had to do because of the settlement is to essentially wipe out a number of our capital projects that were planned. Some of those are Parks-related physical developments that we would have otherwise planned for in the next couple of years.

Chair Considine:
Other questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Our next presentation is the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities. We have a presentation from Kelly McNeil, Executive Director of the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities.

Kelly McNeil, Executive Director, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities:
I am the Executive Director for the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities. I have been with them for the last seven short months. I share similar sentiments to Mayor Berkley about drinking from a fire hose. It has been a short stint with a very steep learning curve, and we have been very busy.

The Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities, who are we? We were founded on October 30, 1959 [page 2, Exhibit D], the day before Nevada Day. Our membership is comprised of the 19 incorporated cities in Nevada plus 2 towns, Gardnerville and Minden, and 4 General Improvement Districts (GIDs). We have Gardnerville Ranchos, Kingsbury, Incline Village, and Indian Hills. Our association is governed by a board of directors. We have an elected official from each of the 25 entities.

Our executive board is comprised of seven members [page 3]. We have our president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, past president, and three at-large seats. The 2025 Executive Board president is Mayor Michelle Romero from the City of Henderson. The vice president is Councilman Albert Torres from the City of Fernley. Our secretary/treasurer is Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Black from the City of North Las Vegas. Our past president is Mayor Lori Bagwell from Carson City.

Our three at-large seats: our large cities are represented by Mayor Ed Lawson from the City of Sparks; our medium cities, Mayor Joe Hardy from Boulder City; and our small cities, towns, and GIDs, Mayor Nathan Robertson from the City of Ely. Each of our Executive Board members serves a one-year term, and when you are elected to the secretary/treasurer position, you climb the ranks all the way to past president. Our at-large seats, they also serve one-year terms with the possibility of running three consecutive years. We are proud of our Executive Board this year. We have a great representation from the north, the south, the rurals, and the small cities, which has taken some time to establish. We are excited to see the new change going forward.

Our mission is strength in unity [page 5]. Unity is strength, and where there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can happen. This past year, last October, we had our annual conference held in Stateline, Nevada, at the Tahoe Blue Event Center. Our theme was Together We Achieve. We provided all sorts of programming and education for our elected city managers and city clerks, where they could all collaborate, work together, and network with their peers.

We are a unified association with the majority of the municipalities. Over the last handful of years, there has been some change with membership, but we are moving forward and we are growing. We focus on local government representation, fiscal stewardship. We want to make sure that our municipalities are utilizing their resources responsibly. We are working together and we are collaborating.

What do cities do [page 6]? Cities may provide direct services; not all of our cities provide the same services. We have public safety, municipal courts, utilities—so they can manage water and/or sanitation, public works, senior services, and maintaining and building parks, community centers, libraries, and public spaces. Our cities are operated either under a municipal charter or governed by a general law statute, which is *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) Chapter 266. As of 2024, there are 13 charter cities and 6 general law cities. The charter cities are Boulder City, Caliente, Carlin, Carson City, Elko, Henderson, Las Vegas, Mesquite, North Las Vegas, Reno, Sparks, Wells, and Yerington. Our general law cities would be Ely, Fallon, Fernley, Lovelock, West Wendover, and Winnemucca. All cities must have at least 1,000 residents to incorporate, and a city would be automatically disincorporated if their population dropped below 150. Our cities also encourage local economic growth through zoning regulations, development, infrastructure projects, and licensing and permitting.

What we do at the League: we advocate for the interests of local government [page 7]. We represent our cities, towns, and GIDs. We provide a united voice for our municipalities at the state and the federal level. We help local governments better serve their communities. We provide training to local government-elected officials. We also serve as a resource and a liaison between the Executive and Legislative Branches, along with the state's federal delegation.

How we help [page 8]: We provide a one-stop shop for input, information, and data to support your work here at the Legislature. We are comprised of elected officials, just like you. We are a resource for the city perspective and the legislative issues informed by our shared constituencies. As questions or bills arise that are introduced that impact local municipalities, we want to be your resource and a voice for local governments. We are here to provide education, solutions, and a unified voice with all that you do. I would like to make sure that you know we are at your service.

Chair Considine:
Committee members, any more questions? [There were none.] Our next presentation is the Nevada Department of Veterans Services. We will have Colonel Mary L. Devine, Director of the Nevada Department of Veterans Services.

Mary L. Devine, Director, Department of Veterans Services:
With me today I have my deputy directors, Rommel "Ro" Ferrer, Deputy Director of Benefits; and Mark McBride, Deputy Director of Healthcare Services. I would also like to acknowledge that we have Andy LePeilbet, Chairman from the United Veterans Legislative Council, with us today. I also have Joseph Theile, my Executive Officer/Chief Financial Officer, and down in Las Vegas we have Terry Hendry, our Communications Director.

We are very excited to be here and let us give you an overview of the department and where we plan to go in these next fiscal years of 2026 and 2027. Our mission at the Department of Veterans Services is to serve all veterans [page 2, Exhibit E]. We do this by honoring their remarkable legacy, and we focus on their commitment and connecting them to their benefits

and services that they have earned throughout their service. This falls in line with our vision, which is to make all Nevada veterans and their families understand, and do what we can do to connect them to their benefits and services that they have earned.

To give you a demographic of who we serve, 7 percent of Nevada's residents are veterans [page 3]. This translates into approximately 216,000 veterans statewide. Our largest population of veterans is in Clark County with about 151,000 veterans. Our smallest population is in Esmeralda County with about 124 veterans. Our older generation is comprised of Korean War veterans and World War II veterans, while our Vietnam War veterans, peacetime veterans, and Gulf War veterans comprise the bulk of our veteran population. Our women veterans make up about 11 percent of the veteran populations. Our women veterans are the largest growing population that we have at this point. Within that subsection, we have a very large population of Native American women veterans who have unique needs.

Some of our veterans need assistance in many different ways. They need assistance in transitioning from active duty, or from the Guard and Reserve post-deployment. They need help in areas such as employment or underemployment, education benefits, and buying a home. The Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) provides assistance in each of these areas to help veterans transition from military service into their civilian sector lives. They may have health care needs. Our veterans service officers provide help with filing U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims, including claims that fall under the federal Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act and things that are in the area of expanded health care. The PACT Act underscores the unique health care needs of those veterans who have served in the military. We also help the Medical Service Corps as well. That is a little bit different. Because of their service they may have been exposed to toxic substances from burn pits and other types of trauma.

We will talk a little bit about our lines of effort [page 4]. The slide has a lot of information really designed for you to take away and take a look at it at other times after the briefing. Our lines of effort really focus on benefits, health care services, and two others that we will talk on the other slides. Our veteran services officers are really our front line. They are the ones who help us connect our veterans to those benefits, whether that be through the VA or other sources that are out there. We work to connect our veterans and military members and their families to the VA benefits, programs, and resources that are out there. Our veterans cemeteries are out there as well as outreach to special populations, which include women veterans, Native Americans, LGBTQ, rural, and other veterans experiencing homelessness or going through the criminal justice system and are a part of our overall outreach programs. Outreach focuses on awareness. We find not all veterans identify as veterans. That is a problem within our community. Helping our veterans understand that no matter where they served, they are a veteran, and they are entitled to the benefits that they have earned.

There are many, many other reasons why they do not identify as veterans. Some of our veterans who served during peacetime do not feel that they have earned the benefits because they were not deployed. It is not an individual veteran's choice if they are deployed or not; it

really has to do with their assignments, timing, and where they were, but they still earn their benefits. We work really hard to make sure that we reach out to each of those veterans. We also see that it is common in our women veterans that they do not identify as veteran, necessarily. We are working hard with our women's committee to make sure we reach out, and we do have a women's veterans conference coming up in March. I am excited to say we have over 100 participants registered for that conference, which is one of the highest attendances we have seen in the last two years. That is an exciting thing.

Our outreach programs are focused on providing awareness, education, and connecting them to the benefits that they have earned. We have made a lot of advances in this area. We are able to really identify our veterans by zip code and take a look comparing data from all the different sources that we have and see which veterans are connected to their benefits and which are not. We call the veterans who are not connected to their benefits "untethered" veterans. Those untethered veterans are the ones we are focusing on with the VA, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and our community partners to make sure that we are working in collaboration with those organizations to reach out and get the word out. Our other lines of effort surround health care and wellness. In those areas, we are including our current two state veterans homes and the programs aimed at the unique health care needs of our veterans and our previous military.

We have our program development [page 5]. This is an area that we are looking at to work with unique needs and to collaborate. This is a new line of effort for us where we are looking at targeted outreach to say, Where are these veterans, what do we need to do, and how do we outreach in their local areas or local communities, areas that we have not been before? Because we have a lot of younger veterans now, they have children in school, elementary school, middle school. Let us take a look at outreach events that are focused on those areas, taking into consideration the special needs that those younger veterans have.

The biggest area of outreach in this program development is about collaboration and community partnerships, working with veteran services organizations, working with the VA, the VBA, and all of the other organizations that are out there. We are working hard to develop any gaps that are out there in addressing the emergent needs of our veterans; seamless access to the programs and services for the veterans we serve. Finally, our administration is our backbone. They are the organizations that support the department overall. That is where we have our financial operations, human resources, contracts and grants—which is another area that we are expanding, our information technology that incorporates all of our websites—all those different things that are out there, as well as our facilities.

Taking a look at the major challenges that we face right now, a couple of those major challenges, looking out over the horizons, are really retaining and recruiting our clinical workforce that supports our currently two homes and soon to be a third home [page 6, Exhibit E]. That is a big deal for us, specifically in that recruiting and retention of our health care professionals, our certified nursing assistants (CNA). We will talk a little bit more about those CNAs in a minute. We continue to focus and try and come up with new

solutions with our recruiting and our health care needs. We do have one program that we are very proud of; it is our Crombie Academy working in our Southern Nevada State Veterans Home. We have a free CNA program. It is a four-week program where we use our underfill for our vacant CNA positions. We hire these young people to come in and go through this four-week program. We have an instructor on site, and we prepare them to take the CNA exam. We have been able to fill about 16 to 18 different positions in that area.

We also are working at expanding our Crombie Academy to assist with Health and Human Services and Corrections. That has been quite a great program for us. When we talk about the CNAs, they are the backbone of what happens in our homes. They are often the first person our veterans see in the morning and the last person they see at night. They help our veterans with some of their most personal needs. They are very, very important to our workforce. We are very happy to say that our four-week program has been very successful. We are in a pause in the program right now because we have hired a new director in that position. We will be standing that up very soon.

We are working on our southern Nevada home, which we will talk about a little bit more. We are waiting for VA federal funding—matching funding to a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) to go forward with our remodel of that home.

Currently, our home in southern Nevada is about 20 years old. We will talk about it in a little while. It is dual occupancy rooms with a shared bathroom. We will be going to a single-occupancy floor plan where each resident has their own bedroom. We are more in line with the VA's small-home design. Should all of our CIPs be approved this year, the department will be undergoing about a half-billion dollars' worth of construction over the next three years to remodel our southern home, to do some other upgrades, and to build our third home in North Las Vegas. Due to those increasing construction costs, we will be keeping a really close eye on what is going on in all of those construction projects to make sure that we stay on budget and on time.

Finally, we are hearing from our veteran services organizations across the state that membership and engaging the veteran community is a challenge for them. That is why that line of effort is for our collaboration and program development. It is a priority to us. One of the things that we are working on is construction. We are growing as a department. Our programs are growing. We have been lucky that we worked with state Buildings and Grounds. We did move into a new building down south on the McCarran complex. We do have a one-story building, walk-up footprint. We have facilities in southern Nevada and in northern Nevada where our veteran services organizations can hold their meetings within our buildings, reducing cost and challenges for them.

In December we moved into a new building off of Gateway Drive in northern Nevada. The building provides us a nice training space where we can house about 25 to 30 of our veteran services organizations and they can hold their meetings right there. Ultimately, our goal on that South Meadows building is to have the entire building and turn that into a veterans center where we can provide more services and more things to our veterans under one roof.

In that veteran services center, we would have the ability for our veteran services organizations and our nonprofit partners to be able to have an office where they could hold their meetings and have kind of an incubator situation where they would be able to hold their meetings and have access to our staff to do things that they need to do.

Our budget priorities [page 6]: We focus on the security surrounding information technology (IT) and making sure that our websites and all the things that we do in the IT space are secure. We have the ability to talk with our veteran services organizations, have them linked to our websites, and have more of a collaboration in that space with them. We are also committed to reaching every corner of our state, so that—we have questions up there under our budget priorities, and we are working with the committees. Travel is a big deal for us. Getting our veteran services officers (VSOs) and our team out to all corners of Nevada is expensive. That is one of the areas that we are working on to make sure that we have a sufficient travel budget to get our VSOs to all corners and all communities to make sure that they are out there.

We will talk a little bit about our SWOT [strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats] analysis to show you some of the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities that we have within the department [page 7]. One of the things that we have is a very talented team. We have a very talented team that is not only our internal team, but our community partners. We have a talented team of veteran services organizations that we reach out to all the time to talk to and solve problems for our veterans; that includes our partners, such as the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars], the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the American Legion. All of those partners, we work with them on a weekly and daily basis to make sure that we are using every tool in the toolbox to get outreach to our veterans. It is very likely that our veterans will associate with the veteran services organization that they identify with the closest. Having the ability to get the information to those veteran services organizations, to get it out there to our veterans, is one of the most important strengths that we have. The community partnerships we have across the over 200 nonprofit organizations in Nevada that identify with veterans is critical to making sure that we have that outreach, we have that seamless message, and we are communicating with our veterans.

We have over 1,000 registered veteran advocates within the state of Nevada. Those are advocates who have been trained by the department with VBA, with the VA, to make sure that they are fully engaged in what veteran benefits are out there. That is another strength that we have within the community. One of our weaknesses is we have not taken advantage of the generosity of the veteran organizations that are out there and of the members of our community to strengthen and take advantage of all the philanthropy and the public-private partnerships that are out there within the state of Nevada.

We have amazingly generous citizens within the state. That is an area that we are working on, on a weekly basis to make sure that we strengthen that opportunity. We work with our community partners to build those better relationships. The clinical staff, which is something that we are working on through multiple different areas—job fairs and different things to make sure that we are doing what we can do. I do not want to leave the impression that we do

not have adequate clinical staff within our facilities. We do. We use a lot of what we call agency staff to fill the gaps. Agency staff are expensive, and they are not permanent, full-time state employees. We would like to get that going.

Some of our threats really surround the rising demand for our services. As you are aware, our human resources mechanisms do not always keep up with the rising demand. We do not have the ability to expand the VSO footprint as quickly as we would like to meet the demand of all the things that are going on within our veteran communities and the rising health care costs. That is an issue that means more veterans are coming to us to make sure that they are associated and affiliated with our veteran's service disabilities and their claims so that their health care needs are taken care of by the VA. That is where we really do use that emerging technology, identifying our veterans to their zip codes and making sure that we better target those untethered veterans to work seamlessly with the VA.

Nevada is supported by three different VA hospitals. We are supported out of Salt Lake City, Utah. We are supported out of Reno and we are supported out of the Las Vegas VA. Our VA partners are huge to our success. I work directly with Chuck Ramey, the team, customer support, and all of the executives down in the Las Vegas area to support the 150,000 veterans down there. If you talk with them, they are bringing in 750 new veterans a month into the VA health care systems in southern Nevada. This requires them to bring a primary health care team into their facility every other month to support the needs of our veterans in southern Nevada.

I would like to talk a little bit about our opportunities. I have mentioned a couple of different times about our public-private partnerships and our nonprofit collaborations. Those are huge to our success and what we need to do within our organization. We do have roundtable meetings with those public and private partners to make sure that we are taking in the needs, seeing what we can do to make our dollars go further, and supporting our veteran services organizations.

An overview of the department: I want everyone to shift from thinking of us only having two veteran homes, to three [page 8, Exhibit E]. We have, in front of the CIP, you will see in this legislative session we are asking for the funding to build the third home in North Las Vegas. That would be next to the Decatur DMV [Department of Motor Vehicles]. We are in the design phase right now. It is a beautiful facility. It will hold 128 veterans, which will offset the need when we remodel the Boulder City home and we go from 180 beds to 120 beds. This new home that we have building in North Las Vegas will take up that gap. It will allow us to take in more veterans and make sure that we have facilities spread out throughout the valley so that it really does serve our families better and they do not have to drive as far to see their loved ones.

We have the two veteran cemeteries, one in Fernley and one in Boulder City. We will talk a little bit more about those in a few minutes. For those of you who did not know, there is a federal veterans cemetery opening in Elko. They are doing the groundwork on that now and that should open within the next year. We will have that third opportunity. I talked a little bit

about our headquarters offices. Those are beautiful facilities, walk-up facilities that will definitely serve our veterans much better. There will be VSOs in each of those locations, expanding our footprints.

As we look at our budget accounts, we have three budget accounts. We will talk a little bit about those but not dive too much into the budget piece of that. I do want to bring your attention to the bottom portion of the chart where it shows the expenditures that we have, both General Fund and non-General Fund. If we move to the next slide, it talks a lot more about where the revenue sources for the NDVS come from [page 9]. As you can see, our largest sources of revenue are from the VA and from federal sources that support our homes north and south. Our private pay and different things is where our revenue really does come from.

We will dive a little bit into each of our facilities [page 10]. Our southern Nevada home, we talked about is a beautiful home. It is aging. It was opened in 2002. It is time for a facelift on that building. As I mentioned before, when we go through the remodel, it is a full remodel. Each resident will have their own room and their own private bathroom. It will be beautiful and modern and all of the things that go with that. That is why it is so important for us, going from a 180-bed facility to a 120-bed facility. Again, that is why it is important for us to embark on that $223 million project to build the third home at the Decatur location—$78 million of that will be state-funded and $145 million of that project will come from the VA in a grant.

Our Sparks home is affectionately referred to by our residents as their five-star hotel [page 11]. They love their rooms there. It is a beautiful facility. If you have not had the opportunity to see the Sparks home, we would love to take you there to tour the facility. Our resident chairman is named Wally. Wally loves his home. Wally has what he calls the Nevada suite because his room is shaped like the state of Nevada. He takes everyone to the Nevada suite to show them his room and talk about how wonderful it is. If you have an opportunity, we have happy hour on Friday afternoons; it is a sports bar, and about every month they have Nerf gun wars in the town hall. If you would like to participate in the Nerf gun wars, you are more than welcome. We had our legislative symposium there a couple of weeks ago. We were able to bring about 100 people into the home to show them what it has to offer. It allows another opportunity for our veteran residents to interface with the different portions of our community and our town hall.

We will talk a little bit about our veterans cemeteries. We are very honored to have almost 70,000 veterans interred in our two cemeteries. The Boulder City cemetery is stunningly beautiful. Chris Naylor and his team do an amazing job of taking care of that facility. It is the second-busiest cemetery in the country. They do anywhere between five and eight interments a day. We pay special attention to both the team in Boulder City and the team in Fernley to make sure that we are taking care of the needs of our groundskeepers and workers. That is a heavy lift when you are paying honors and respects to anywhere between five and seven service members a day and you are talking with their families. Interments are offered at no charge to our veterans. We do have a fee of $450 for our spouses or Gold Star families. We

are happy to discuss that. There may be additional fees depending on the memorials and things that they pick for those cemeteries. Again, they are beautiful and well maintained. We are asking for some assistance for our cemeteries this year in our budget items to replace some of their equipment as we can no longer get repair parts for them.

As we do outreach and we get out there to our veterans, our VAST [Veterans Advocacy and Support Team], they are our frontline [page 13]. They are the ones with anywhere between 15 to 20 in-person meetings a day. Our teams take over 100 phone calls a day for veterans outreaching for different types of services, questions like, how do they get everything from affordable housing to connect it to their VA benefits? That is one of our busiest areas of the department. We do a lot of things with training for our VSOs. We do a quarterly training with them. We will begin this year pulling all VSOs credentialed to the department into an annual training where we bring in the VBA, the VA, and our National Veterans Legal Services Program to one location. We renew their credentials and talk to them about making sure what their training has to offer and how we make sure their skills are the most current that they can be.

I bring your attention to the last bullet on this slide [page 13]. Veterans bring in about $1.9 billion into the Nevada economy. That comes from all areas between their disability compensations, the active-duty wages, the pensions that come in, our dependency and indemnity compensation for dependents, as well as our burial allowances. When our VSOs make contacts with a veteran who is untethered and are able to help them connect to their veteran service benefits, on average that veteran earns about $1,900 in compensation. With every one of those contacts, we do bring more money into the Nevada economy, as well as improve the quality of life for our veterans. That is where our veteran services organizations are very helpful to us. If we do not have connections with those veterans, they bring them to the table for a VSO and we are able to increase their income, which is a very important part of what we do.

Talking about our community outreach programs, you can see on the slide we are in all kinds of different areas [page 14, Exhibit E]. We are outreaching and having tables and doing whatever we can do to get the message out there through flyers, through individual contacts. Again, the theme of this is connecting our veterans with their earned benefits and resources and programs that they should have as a transition off active duty. A lot of the benefits, when they go to their transition points on active duty, is about how do they find a job. We outreach, we send each one of our veterans who has identified Nevada as where they are going to relocate a packet, a welcome packet to their home and their address to say, These are the benefits that we can do for you when you relocate into Nevada. We would like to really step up our game with the welcome home packet and reach out by telephone or by email or other ways we can talk with them. That is the NVTAP [Nevada Transition Assistance Program] that we will be working through this year.

Our health and wellness program is a lot of focusing on those unique areas. Suicide prevention is huge for us. We are still losing 16 veterans a day nationally. That is too many. One soul lost to suicide is way too many. We are stepping up our efforts in that area with

both the Governor's challenge and the mayor's challenge, to make sure that we are doing everything we can do to prevent veteran suicide.

These are some of the areas that we are in. We have an opportunity through the NVDS to collaborate and to make sure that that 7 percent of our population is well taken care of, that we are here and honor that proud service and history of our veterans. From our Battle Born roots to our members of the active component and our members of the Nevada National Guard who are serving abroad today, we have a unique opportunity to make sure that their history and their legacies are taken care of. We appreciate everything that we are able to do. I recently had an opportunity to participate in a ceremony for one of our World War II veterans. It was a gentleman by the name of No-No Zicari. No-No is 102 years young, and he fought on the beaches in Normandy. He was recently presented with the French Legion of Honor in a special ceremony held in Las Vegas. No-No's story and legacy, the legacy he will leave behind, represents the best in all of us.

The more than 216,000 veterans who have proudly served Nevada; they call our communities home. The Department of Veterans Services is proud to serve our veterans and stands ready to support the Governor, our lawmakers, and the citizens of Nevada. Thank you for this opportunity.

Chair Considine:
Thank you for the presentation. Thank you for what you do. We do have some questions. I will start with Assemblymember D'Silva.

Assemblymember D'Silva:
Thank you, Colonel Devine, and team for the excellent presentation and for your dedicated service to the state. I have to give a shout-out to Mr. Andy LePeilbet with the United Veterans Legislative Commission. I had a five-part question, but this was such a thorough presentation that it has become a two-part question now. Part one, I know you mentioned about the outreach efforts of the department. I was wondering if you could give some specifics about the actual role that the department is playing in getting out to our rural and frontier counties and engaging with those veterans there. Secondly, I do get this question from my northern Nevada friends, especially my Reno veterans' community. That is the United Service Organizations (USO) at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. I know that we have two down at Harry Reid International Airport. Is there a role that the department can play and maybe bring a USO to the airport here in Reno?

Mary Devine:
Our outreach efforts are everything; we do block parties where we bring veterans together and have veterans outreach twice a year, we do everything from every event, Reno Rodeo, different community events. We set up tables, hand out flyers. We have social media campaigns for outreach. We have a newsletter that we do for outreach. I did not bring the exact numbers of contacts that we have had. We reach tens of thousands of veterans every year in handing out our flyers in 1:1 contact, by setting up tables, by doing suicide prevention outreach. We have recently hired, part-time, James “JJ” Phoenix, who was the former

chairman of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. He has come on board with us—he is also a member of the Washoe County School District—to help with our 28 tribal members. We are really focusing on that targeted outreach as well.

As far as the USO, I will reach out to my USO partner in Las Vegas and see what we can do to get the USO into the Reno-Tahoe Airport. I do know that the USO chapter here in northern Nevada is very active. They do a lot of different events for the Air National Guard, Army National Guard, and at our veterans' block parties, and things like that. They are a very active sponsor.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
Thank you, Colonel, for your service and, of course, for your team, for such a thorough presentation today. I just agree with my colleague. I learned so much, even though this is my second time hearing the presentation. I feel like I am learning a lot more. I see that there is such a multitude of services that you are doing. It is just amazing to see the amount of growth in our populations. Obviously, you are dealing with an increased amount of caseload as well as relocation from many states across the country.

I am such a nerd when it comes to this, but I am so amazed that you use SWOT. Not many people use SWOT anymore. That is just awesome that you are so brave at giving us a detailed look of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in your agency, setting a higher bar for other agencies when they come here, and really show us the challenges that you are dealing with. I had a four-part question, but because of your thorough presentation, I only have one left. Are there increasing demands because you are onboarding about 750 veterans a day? That is a lot. Are there increasing demands for business initiative support? I know that you focused on a lot of things about the support of the day-to-day things, but are there initiatives that you are being asked to do in terms of supporting veterans who want to start a small business? I know these days folks are doing multiple streams of income. I am sure that as a small business owner myself, I want to make sure that we create opportunities for as many people who want to go into business for themselves and their families.

Mary Devine:
That is a great question. We are partnering with the Southern Nevada Veterans Chamber of Commerce and have reached out to Ann Silver in the north with the Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce, and we will start working with the rural areas. There are a lot of veterans who are interested in starting small businesses. The areas that they are specifically concerned with are contracting with not only state government, but federal government. Because there are so many, they feel that there are a number of barriers in those areas for filling out all the paperwork and understanding how to get contracts with those businesses.

We have participated in a couple of open forums to talk about how we can do clinics for veterans who want to start businesses or strengthen their business. The Lincoln Dynamic Foundation is another nonprofit that has offered to reach out and help us do clinics in this area. As we bring on our outreach personnel, yes, that is something in the 2027 Legislative

Session we will start working on. It is a challenge to get those partners. This is part of the public-private partnership. There are a couple of different nonprofit collaborations that would like to be business mentors that are members of the business community that have successful businesses. They would like to become mentors to our small businesses that are maybe not quite where they want to be. This is an area that we are working on. It is not as much in the forefront as connecting our veterans to their benefits. We are in that space as well.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
I really appreciate that. If you have the ability to provide the data—I am not sure if you keep them, I know you have a lot on your plate. If you do have the ability to share the data of how many of your veterans are interested in more business support, if you have that data, we would love to have it and see how we can be more supportive in that particular area.

Mary Devine:
We will get it back to you.

Assemblymember Karris:
What a fabulous presentation. I have more of a comment than a question. My father is interred at the Southern Nevada State Veterans Cemetery in Boulder City. It is just beautiful and well maintained. What a respectful and beautiful service you provide.

Mary Devine:
If you have an opportunity to participate in Flags In day at either of our cemeteries, it is the Saturday before Memorial Day. It is an absolutely moving experience. In about 45 minutes, 300 to 500 volunteers show up, take the flags, and put them out on each of the graves at the cemeteries, both north and south. It is moving to see the number of family members of all ages, children, you know everybody there, the Boy Scouts, the Devil Dogs from the Marine Corps, they are all there. It takes about 45 minutes to put out somewhere in the neighborhood of 40,000 flags. It is incredible. I would invite all of you to participate.

Chair Considine:
Earlier on, we were talking about demographics. On the presentation it says there are 644 who experienced homelessness [page 3, Exhibit E]. Do we know what counties they are in or how they are dispersed around Nevada? Or is that just a number for the whole state without individual data?

Mary Devine:
We do have the data, and we can provide that. We are working with the VA both north and south. We also have a homeless representative who is working with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and several other agencies in southern Nevada and in northern Nevada to help with those homeless veterans.

Chair Considine:
That leads to my next question. I had an outreach last year. I met a woman who was homeless and a veteran, and she did not know exactly whom to call. I called someone who used to be a Marine. They connected them with the VA. The president of the VA continually called the veteran and several times did not get an answer or did not get a response in a few days. But the VA did not give up. Eventually, they found a place for her to move into. Thank you for that. That goes to all of the units that you are building, that you are expanding on. Do you have a sufficient amount? I know some groups, like women, are hesitant to go to places where it is primarily men. I do not know if you have additional beds or any other plans for that kind of [Audio was lost.]

Mary Devine:
We do have a need for assisted care of roughly about 650 beds. We will be short about 300 even when we build the second facility. We keep in good contact with the other assisted living facilities that are in the state. We provide—it is called Veterans In Care. We go out to all the assisted living facilities and provide flags, pins, and do a ceremony for our veterans who are in other assisted living centers. We will be expanding that program this year to make sure that we invite both the VA and all of our community partners to make it an even bigger event when we recognize those veterans in other facilities.

To get back to your question, you are correct, we are having some challenges with women. They do not really want to go to facilities that are largely male, specifically, our women who have experienced military sexual trauma. We are working with the community partners, north and south, to see what we can do to have those special locations or at least segmented locations. We are, again, working with the VA in other areas to get after that particular challenge. We are not where we want to be, but we will get there.

Chair Considine:
Is it possible, or if it is available, to have the homeless representative or a phone number for the Committee members to have when we run across folks who are veterans and in need of help so we can connect with the best person for northern Nevada or southern Nevada? However you want to break it up so that we all have that ability to connect somebody immediately.

Mary Devine:
We will get you a quick reference sheet.

Assemblymember Gallant:
With HUD [Housing and Urban Development]-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), the Section 8 voucher that is specifically for veterans, is that a program that is hard to work with? Do all the veterans qualify? Is it being utilized enough? Is there some way that we could be more supportive so it could be utilized?

Mary Devine:
Currently in southern Nevada, just over all 1,300 HUD-VASH vouchers are in use. I do know that the VA is seeking an additional 100 vouchers in southern Nevada. We are working with our partners in northern Nevada to get a better handle on the numbers in northern Nevada and in rural Nevada. I had a meeting on it last week asking for support from Nevada Senator Catherine Cortez Masto's office for additional vouchers. Where the challenge is with the vouchers, sometimes our landlords are not receptive to taking the vouchers. We will work with our VA partners and see what we can do on that to get some training and some additional information out there. In southern Nevada right now, they are all in use. When I spoke with Chuck Ramey from the VA, he mentioned to me that this is the first time they have all been used and there is a waiting list for them in southern Nevada.

Assemblymember Gallant:
How many vouchers do you think you need in order to satisfy the demand? As a landlord, I think I have 80 Section 8 leases right now. It is a difficult program that not all landlords want to do. It is not necessarily the clientele, but the massive amounts of contracts, inspections, paperwork, and time frame; it takes up to 60 days to get that first payment and sometimes those landlords just cannot; I think there are some systemic and bureaucratic issues in terms of why some landlords are not necessarily embracing these programs. Back to my original question, how many vouchers do you think you would need to satisfy the total demand?

Mary Devine:
I am going to have to get back to you on that because it is a relatively large number. Let me get back with my VA partners and get that number to you.

Assemblymember Flanagan:
In the line of housing, is there ever a space where you use group home approaches? You said in the facilities there are 128 beds or 180 beds, but there are a lot more veterans who are homeless, or need that, or they do not always need as much care. Is there ever a space where there is a partnership for group homes to provide them with a place to live, maybe together, but in a home setting that reenters them into the normalcy of neighborhood, family, and community?

Mary Devine:
We are actually exploring right now. Deputy Director McBride and his team are looking at domiciliary homes, and the opportunity for what we could do in that space for transition housing in a domiciliary situation. Those are usually 8 to 12 homes. We are taking a look at how we can get into that space. Nevada has not done that through the department before. We are reaching out to our partners to find out what we can do. It may be a great model in our rural communities because they need help, but they do not need 120 beds. We are taking a look at that. We did have an opportunity with the VA to have a meeting with regard to what they call veteran foster care. This is where homes that are similar to foster homes bring in a veteran and help them in a home setting, in a one-on-one situation. The program has launched in northern Nevada, and Las Vegas is trying to get into that space. We are learning about that possibility at this point.

Assemblymember Jackson:
For the housing voucher for veterans, do veterans who were dishonorably discharged qualify for that voucher?

Mary Devine:
I do not believe so. I am going to have to get a concrete answer for you, but that is something that we usually work with veterans who need discharge upgrades. That is one of the things that our VSOs work on with them, is to see if we can get their discharges upgraded.

Chair Considine:
Are there any other questions from the Committee? [There were none.] We will now move into public comment. [Committee rules and protocol for public testimony were reviewed.] Is there any public comment here in Carson City or Las Vegas? Seeing none, is there anyone on the phone lines for public comment? [There was no one.]

Remainder of page intentionally left blank; signature page to follow.

The next meeting for the Committee on Government Affairs will be Friday, February 7, 2025, at 8 a.m. in this room. That concludes our meeting for today. The meeting is adjourned [at 9:47 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Karri Hurwitz
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Assemblymember Venicia Considine, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
	C	Shelley Berkley, Mayor, City of Las Vegas; and Sabra Newby, Deputy City Manager, City of Las Vegas	PowerPoint presentation titled "Assembly Committee on Government Affairs Executive Overview"
	D	Kelly McNeil, Executive Director, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities	PowerPoint presentation titled "Introduction of the League, 83rd Legislative Session"
	E	Mary L. Devine, Director, Nevada Department of Veterans Services	PowerPoint presentation titled "State of Nevada Department of Veterans Services"