

## NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (NACO)

Board of Directors' Meeting

October 23, 2020, 9:30 a.m.

*Virtual Attendance Only*

### ADOPTED MINUTES

**Attendance:** President French, President Elect Kirkpatrick, Vice President Lucey, Past President Waits, Carson City Supervisor Giomi, Churchill County Commissioner Olsen, Elko County Commissioner Dahl, Eureka County Commissioner Goicoechea, Lincoln County Commissioner Higbee, Lincoln County Commissioner Lister, Lyon County Commissioner Keller, Nye County Commissioner Wichman, Pershing County Commissioner Shank, Washoe County Commissioner Hartung, White Pine County Commissioner Carson and NACO Staff (Dagny Stapleton, Vinson Guthreau, Colby Prout and Amanda Evans)

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. **Public Comment.** Past President Waits informed the Board that AT&T had filed another application for relief of their designation as a Provider of Last Resort and that the Public Utilities Commission would hear the application on the 28<sup>th</sup>. She encouraged all Commissioners to look at the application.
2. **Approval of Agenda.** The agenda was approved on a motion by Commissioner Hartung with second by President Elect Kirkpatrick.
3. **NACO President's Report.** President French reminded the Board that the Annual Conference was just a month out and encouraged registration for the event. He also noted that with the virtual platform it is an opportunity for staff that usually isn't able to attend the event to take advantage of the educational opportunities presented. He concluded his remarks by suggesting that a post pandemic dinner may be a way for the Board to gather as they normally would at the conference.
4. **NACO Executive Director's Report.** Dagny informed the Board that the Interim Finance Committee had approved the distribution of funds from the Indigent Accident Fund to help counties pay their Medicaid match assessments. She reminded the Board that the Board for the Fund for Accident Care to Indigent Persons had previously approved distribution and the counties should expect checks for the funds in the near future. She noted that she is working with the State and county Human Services Administrators on the new contracts for the assessments and that she will bring an update to the Board at a future meeting. Dagny discussed updates to the Nevada Health Response dashboard that include additional county level data on COVID-19. Vinson concluded the item by informing the Board that outreach to Legislators continues in advance of the 2021 Session and encouraged the Board to post the Nevada-We are Counties video to their social media platforms.
5. **Approval of Minutes of the September 25th, 2020 NACO Board of Directors Meeting.** The minutes were approved on a motion by Commissioner Hartung with second by Commissioner Carson.

6. **Presentation and approval of NACO's August 2020 Financials and August 2020 Investment Reports.** The financial statements and investment reports were approved on a motion by Commissioner Hartung with second by Commissioner Carson.
7. **Preliminary Presentation and Discussion of NACO's 2021 Budget.** Dagny directed the Board to the draft documents included in the agenda packet. She then gave a high level overview of projected county dues amounts, which include a .5% public lands assessment based on the 2019 Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) distributions; a proposed 3% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for the Deputy Director, Natural Resources and Office Managers; and a small stipend allowance for an intern during the legislative session. She noted that the Association is in a good financial position due to cost savings realized by the pandemic shutdown and savings found by staff in other areas. She concluded her remarks by thanking Commissioner Lucey, who as Vice President, is tasked with assisting her with developing the proposed budget. Past President Waits stated that Dagny should be included in the COLA and Commissioner Wichman, President French, Commissioner Higbee and Commissioner Hartung all spoke in support of the proposal. Vice President Lucey stated that Dagny was very conscientious about bringing the inclusion of COLA's to the budget given the fact that the counties are having budget issues related to the pandemic and noted that the amount of work completed on behalf of the Board by the small staff of four is remarkable. Commissioner Higbee also remarked on the work of staff noting that not only are the commissioners kept well informed, but their staff is as well. The preliminary budget will be brought back to the Board for final approval in December with the addition of Director Stapleton in the COLAs. Approved on a motion by Vice President Waits with second by Commissioner Wichman.
8. **Discussion and Update Regarding NACO's 2020 Annual Conference.** Dagny informed the Board that staff is continuing to work on the program for the event and encouraged them to register for the Conference. She also echoed President French's remarks that the virtual platform is a great way for county staff that would normally not be able to attend and take advantage of the event. She gave an overview of the draft conference schedule included in the agenda packet, noting that National Association of Counties (NACo) Executive Director, Matt Chase would be speaking on Wednesday. She also thanked President Elect Kirkpatrick for suggesting the inclusion of former Clark County CFO Guy Hobbs to speak to the group regarding county fiscal matters as well. Dagny informed the Board that the University of Nevada would be hosting the normal POWER courses virtually in December, and noted that University of Nevada, Extension is providing valuable technical assistance as well. The Board held a robust discussion about the possibility of hosting an in-person dinner prior to the end of the year and staff will be researching options for a potential luncheon or dinner event in December.
9. **Approval of Additional NACO 2020 Associate Members.** Western States Petroleum's membership was approved on a motion by Past President Waits with second by Commissioner Higbee.
10. **Update on NACO BDRs and Other Policy Issues Affecting Counties Leading into the 2021 Session of the Nevada Legislature.** The Board was informed that legislative outreach on NACO's bills had begun and the members were encouraged to participate on the Legislative Subcommittee. The Board was informed that there are several property tax reform proposals moving forward and received a review of the current property tax formula. A proposal from the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities that would eliminate the secondary calculation on the caps and take depreciation down to 1% was

discussed. The Board noted that property tax changes are controversial and that all proposals need to be looked at closely. The Board expressed concerns for seniors with changes to depreciation and noted that all proposals need to be looked at, including previous bills. President French suggested the formation of a working group to discuss the situation and bring a proposal back to the Board. Dagny concluded the item by noting that another proposal being floated was to enable increases by a couple of cents over the \$3.64 property tax rate cap that would not be subject to the caps. She requested that the members let her know if they were interested in serving on the working group.

**11. Presentation on Payments in Lieu of Taxes, Ken Ivory, Former Utah State**

**Representative and Senior Vice President of Aeon AI.** Mr. Ivory presented to the Board on the 2018 resolution that passed in the Utah Legislature and how the development of the program to determine the fair taxable value of public lands was developed. President French inquired whether the program had been presented to the Western Governors Association (WGA). The program had not yet been presented to the group; however, it had been presented to the Council of State Governments. The Board encouraged Mr. Ivory to move forward working with NACo's Western Interstate Region to develop partnerships to move the program forward and stressed the importance of presenting before the WGA. No action was taken on the item.

**12. Presentation on the Nevada Local Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council Including County Membership and an Update from the Department of Sentencing Policy, Victoria Gonzalez, Executive Director.**

Ms. Gonzalez gave the Board an overview of the Council and department created under AB236. She noted the primary goal of the Council is to slow the growth of the prison population, recidivism and to institute mental health programs within the prison system to assist in those efforts. She informed the Board that the Council will have county members assist in identifying county level programs to be conducted using grant funding. Ms. Gonzalez informed the Board that each county will have an appointment and they are looking to have the Council appointments completed by July 2021 so that a Chair could be named in August and the first meeting could be held in September 2021. Past President Waits inquired as to the type of members they are looking for and Ms. Gonzalez noted that under the current NRS there are no specific qualifications for membership. She concluded the item by clarifying that they are looking for the Council membership to be comprised of stakeholders from the criminal justice system and mental health and treatment communities.

**13. Discussion of and Possible NACO Endorsement of Senator Cortez Masto's Proposed Federal Legislation: *More Opportunities for Rural Economies (MORE) Grants Package, to Benefit High-Density Public Lands Counties.***

Vinson gave an overview of the two pieces of legislation, one centered around the United States Department of Agriculture and the other around the Department of Transportation. The goal of the bipartisan legislation is to address inequities in predominately rural counties by addressing adequate infrastructure and access to Federal grant funding. The legislation would create a definition of high-density public lands counties, of which 14 Nevada counties would qualify. The legislation would reduce required matching funds for federal grants in those counties by 50%, give additional support to those counties for grant applications and define allowable projects. President French asked what the Senator was looking for from the group and Trevor Dean, from the Senator's office informed the Board that an indication of support would be appropriate at this juncture in the process. President French, Commissioner Higbee and Commissioner Goicoechea all expressed support for the proposals noting that it is good for rural counties and thanked the Senator for listening to their concerns. Endorsement of the

legislation was passed on a motion by Commissioner Goicoechea with second by Commissioner Higbee.

14. **Update and Possible Action Regarding Natural Resources and Public Lands Issues Affecting Counties Including:** Commissioner Higbee updated the Board on the Subcommittee meeting the previous day. The Committee held discussions on BDRs put forth by the Legislative Committee on Public Lands, hearings within the State Engineer's Office on water basins, developments on the Bi-State Sage Grouse issue and a newly filed law suit, the panel to be held at the Annual Conference and received a presentation from the Department of Agriculture.
  - a. **Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) Modernization Including Legislative Status.** Vinson updated the Board on the proposal. He discussed the Nevada Consolidated Proposal that was developed with a group of stakeholders. He then informed the Board that Senator Cortez Masto introduced a bill to be included in the 2021 National Defense Reauthorization Act that addresses many county priorities. Specifically, that mitigation efforts would be codified in the legislation and must occur prior to approval of the land withdrawal. He also noted that several county lands bills and a transfer of some BLM lands were also included in the bill.
  - b. **Endorsement of Commissioner Jim French for Renomination to the Bureau of Land Management's Natural Resource Management Seat on the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board.** Colby informed the Board that staff encouraged support of President French's renomination and that his nomination has support from both Senator Cortez Masto and Congressman Amodei. President French gave the Board an overview of the changes to the Advisory Board since his appointment and the work done to advance solutions in Washington. He also shared that the staff of the Advisory Board had changed, noting vacant positions and lack of direction from leadership. He also informed the Board that the seats dedicated to an advocate and management had changed and that the current Chair and Vice Chair of the group would not be seeking renomination. President French noted that this would leave a hole in the group's leadership and a lack of institutional knowledge regarding the intent of the Board's actions. Commissioner Carson and Past President Waits expressed support for the renomination. President French's renomination to the Advisory Board was unanimously supported on a motion by Commissioner Carson with second by Commissioner Wichman.
15. **NACO Committee of the Emeritus Update.** Past President Waits informed the Board that the Committee would be meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup> to solidify the details of the Newly Elected Officials Training to be held during the Annual Conference. Vinson informed the Board that the workshop held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October on Indigent Defense was a success and that a recording of the workshop can be found on NACO's YouTube channel.
16. **National Association of Counties Board Member Updates.** Commissioner Higbee informed the Board that recent activities of the NACo Board were centered around issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.
17. **Western Interstate Region Board Member Updates and Updates from National Association of Counties' Policy Steering Committee Members.** President French informed the Board that he had missed the last WIR meeting and would have a more detailed report at the next meeting.

18. **NACO Board Member Updates.** Updates were given by members of the Board on activities within their counties.

19. **Public Comment.** Leanne Carrey of Progressive Rancher Magazine spoke with concerns about recent activities regarding water rights and basin designations and encouraged the Board to consider legal actions if deemed necessary.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.