

NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (NACO)

Board of Directors' Meeting

February 27, 2026, 9:30am

NACO Conference Room

304 S. Minnesota Street

Carson City, NV 89703

ADOPTED MINUTES

Attendance: President Gardner, President Elect Andriola, Vice President Keller, Past President Andreozzi, Carson City Supervisor Giomi, Douglas County Commissioner Tolbert, Esmeralda County Commissioner Perez, Humboldt County Commissioner Tipton, Lander County Commissioner Helming, Lincoln County Commissioner Reese, Nye County Commissioner Boskovich, Storey County Commissioner Carmona, Washoe County Commissioner Herman, White Pine County Commissioner Carson and NACO staff (Vinson Guthreau, Jennifer Berthiaume, Amy Hyne-Sutherland, and Amanda Berg)

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

1. **Public Comment.** President Gardner invited Jeremy Drew from Resource Concepts, Inc. to have a seat at the table as he would be participating in the discussion on agenda items.
2. **Approval of Agenda.** For Possible Action
3. **NACO President's Report.** President Gardner informed the Board that he had just returned from the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Legislative Conference and thanked Vinson and Jennifer for their work on scheduling meetings with the Federal Delegation, noting that the Executive Committee and Staff met with Senator Cortez Masto on Monday and Senator Rosen and Congressman Amodei on Tuesday. He informed the Board that they discussed statewide level objectives and insights on important Federal policy, including continued funding of Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Secure Rural Schools (SRS), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and county lands bills. President Gardner noted that the meetings were fruitful and also discussed thanking Congressman Amodei for his 16 years of Federal service and his many accomplishments on behalf of counties prior to his retirement. President Gardner also announced that NACo had formally introduced the We are Counties campaign, which is a three year, three-million-dollar project to highlight the essential role counties play in all areas of our communities. He concluded his report by thanking Storey County for supporting the State Dinner held at the Oyamel restaurant in Washington DC for the Nevada attendees of the Legislative Conference.
4. **NACO Executive Director's Report.** Vinson also remarked on the successful meetings with members of the Federal Delegation held in Washington DC earlier in the week and that the conference was overall successful. He drew the Board's attention to the approved federal priorities document included in the agenda packet, reminding them that the document guides the Association's advocacy efforts throughout the year and that copies had been given to the delegation. Vinson reminded the Board of a bill passed during the 2025 legislative session that created a task force regarding public records. He discussed the makeup of the task force, which is 50% from the media and 50% governmental

representatives. He informed the Board that the task force had met for the first time the previous day and that he had been appointed by Senate Minority Leader Titus as the representative for local government, he also informed the Board that he had been elected as the Vice Chair for the group. Vinson discussed the requirement for the group to meet four times and produce a report for the legislature prior to the next session. He also discussed the last reforms to public records laws being completed in 2019, which NACO **engaged in**. Vinson highlighted the need to provide a definition of what a public record is to inform future legislative activity. Past President Andreozzi noted that the purpose of public record requests is to ensure governmental transparency but noted that labor organizations have abused the regulation for their contract negotiations, he also noted that the requests often distract county staff members from necessary duties. Vinson acknowledged the amount of time staff must spend on requests and noted that he has had many conversations around the issue and continues to stress the fact that local government's job is to provide services not records. He also noted that 99% of records requests are routinely fulfilled, and the purpose is to shed light on what government is doing, not what your neighbor is doing. Commissioner Tipton echoed Past President Andreozzi's concerns with bargaining groups, also noting that they have the ability to have closed meetings. President Elect Andriola inquired as to how AI might be incorporated as a resource to pull necessary data in a closed loop and Vinson stated that technology would be part of the discussions held by the task force. Supervisor Giomi also mentioned the amount of time it takes staff to redact necessary information, especially body worn camera video, and that the regulations regarding charges for staff time are ambiguous and that the threat of lawsuits surrounding requests needs to be addressed. Vinson concluded his report by informing the Board that he had been informed that Moreton Asset Management, who oversees the NACO investment accounts, is merging with Meeder Public Funds. He informed the Board that some counties as well as POOL/PACT utilize Meeder for their investments and that nothing regarding the NACO accounts is expected to change, including the staff currently managing them.

5. **Approval of Minutes of January 23, 2026, NACO Board of Directors Meeting.** The minutes were approved as presented on a motion by President Elect Andriola with second by Vice President Keller.
6. **Possible Selection of One (1) NACO Sponsored Applicant to Attend the National Association of Counties 2026 County Leadership Training Institute (CLI) in Washington D.C.** President Gardner noted that the year was in error on the agenda, and staff was directed to adjust the minutes accordingly. Vinson drew the Boards attention to the backup material included in the agenda packet and reminded the Board that CLI is an annual intensive training opportunity held at the end of May, and that the tuition for an attendee is included in the approved NACO budget. He informed the Board that previous attendees include former Washoe County Commissioner Bob Lucey, Clark County Commissioner Kirkpatrick, President Elect Andriola, and Lyon County Commissioner Hendrix. Vinson discussed the Board's policy to rotate nominees between urban and rural counties and that of the nominees of each State association; only thirty are selected by NACO to attend. He then informed the Board that staff's recommendation for this year's nominee was Douglas County Commissioner Tolbert, and his nomination was unanimously approved on a motion by President Elect Andriola with second by Vice President Keller.
7. **Possible Re-Appointment of Lorina Dellinger, Assistant County Manager, Nye County, to the Board on Indigent Defense Services (BIDS) (NRS 180.300).** Vinson reminded the Board that BIDS is responsible for oversight the State's public defense services and Ms. Dellinger is one of four appointments NACO has to that Board. He also informed the Board her professional qualifications also fulfil the requirement for a member of the Board to have

county fiscal knowledge. Vinson informed the Board that Ms. Dellinger is willing to continue service on BIDS. President Gardner inquired as to the terms of the other NACO appointees and Vinson informed the Board that the appointments are staggered, but Ms. Dellinger's current term ends in June and the appointment is preemptive to allow the Governor's office time to complete the reappointment process. Ms. Dellinger thanked the Board for their support, and her reappointment was approved on a motion by Commissioner Perez with second by Commissioner Helming.

8. **Possible Re-Appointment of Shayla Holmes, Director, Lyon County Human Services, Grants Management Advisory Committee (GMAC), Nevada Department of Health, and Human Services (NRS 232.383).** Vinson reminded the Board that the Committee is responsible for the distribution of the tobacco settlement funds held within the Fund for Healthy Nevada. He informed the Board that Ms. Holmes has been a highly effective member of the GMAC and has been elevated to Vice Chair. Ms. Holmes' reappointment was approved on a motion by Vice President Keller with second by Commissioner Perez.
9. **Possible Re-Appointment of Andrew Bennett, Director, Clark County Office of Traffic Safety to the Nevada Executive Committee on Traffic Safety (NRS 408.581).** Vinson reminded the Board that NACO has one appointee to the Committee and informed them that Mr. Bennett has done an excellent job on behalf of NACO, noting the detailed reports he submits following the meetings. Vinson remarked on Mr. Bennett's passion for traffic safety and reminded the Board of work done during the special legislative session to address concerns surrounding traffic safety in school zones. Mr. Bennett's reappointment was approved on a motion by Commissioner Helming with second by Commissioner Tipton.
10. **Update Regarding the Nevada State Fair, from Representatives of the Office of the Director of The Nevada Department of Agriculture, Including but not limited to County Volunteers and Participation.** Doug Farris, Deputy Director of the Department, thanked the Board for their time and briefly explained that the official Nevada State Fair was first held in 1874 and continued annually until 2010. Noting that President Elect Andriola had instigated the conversations within the Department to resurrect the event. Mr. Farris then introduced Department staff members Ciara Ressel, Monica Barbosa, and Julieanna Hendrix to give the Board additional information on the planning efforts for the fair. Ms. Ressel gave an overview of the State fairgrounds usage (commonly known as the Reno Livestock Events Center), the long-term lease held by Washoe County, and AB333 passed during the 2025 Legislative Session which returned the control of the fairgrounds to the State under the purview of the Director of the Department of Agriculture. It was announced that the State Fair would be held June 11-14 prior to the Reno Rodeo, and programming would include both a Nevada Junior Livestock Show and 4-H expo, a farmers' market, and carnival. The staff also informed the Board that a 'walk through' of Nevada is in development that would allow all 17 counties to highlight what is unique about their county and communities in a 10x10 booth in front of the main arena, where the tour would be the first thing that fair attendees would experience. The Board was informed of the expected attendance and major traffic times during which the booths would need to be staffed. Upon questions from President Gardner and Commissioner Carmona it was clarified that tables would be provided for the booths, parking would be free and it was expected that general admission pricing would be about \$10. A special livestock sale, the Governor's Sale, was announced, and it was explained that the sale would consist of the top five animals from each market class. The Board's attention was drawn to the information contained in the agenda packet, and direct communication with the Department was requested regarding the individual county plans for their participation. Commissioner Helming inquired as to whether the Fair would be leaning into the 250th birthday of America, and it was clarified

that it was part of the discussions and that the counties have complete liberty to highlight what they do best.

11. **Update from NACO Health and Human Services Manager.** Amy reminded the Board of the forum on the Rural Health Transformation Program being hosted with the Nevada Health Authority later in the afternoon, noting that the purpose is to provide information specific to county participation. She also informed the Board that the Executive Director from Nevada Rural Hospital Partners will be in attendance to discuss plans for critical access hospitals and reminded the Board that collaborative efforts will be privileged in the selection process for the grant funds. Amy also reminded the Board that the workshop series on rural child welfare had been delayed by one month due to leadership changes at the Division of Child and Family Services and gave the Board an overview of the topics to be discussed at each of the four monthly workshops. She also discussed work being done with Clark and Washoe Counties on funding of child welfare and behavioral health. Amy referred to Supervisor Giomi's previous mention of the PACE program which allows for all-inclusive care for the elderly and the passage of legislation which will allow for the standing up of the program in Nevada. Amy stated that she is monitoring developments as it goes through the organizational process, including the RFP for vendor selections. Supervisor Giomi noted that the program has the potential to provide relief to counties on their State assessments for the long-term care matches.

12. **Update from NACO Staff Regarding Systems Transition and Engagement with the Nevada Department of Taxation and "True up" of Consolidated Tax Revenue.** Vinson informed the Board that he had received valuable feedback from the counties including on the all-county call that had been held previously to discuss the issue. He also informed the Board that he had engaged with the Department and communicated the Boards request for a presentation to increase county confidence in their ongoing conversations with the Department. He also discussed communications submitted with additional details regarding county concerns and informed the Board that he had received no follow-up from the Department. Vinson discussed the potential of elevating the conversation to the Governor's office if necessary and stressed that the goal of the counties to coordinate and collaborate on an effective solution to the issue is not progressing. He also noted that an alternative solution could be to work through the Committee on Local Government Finance (CLGF) which is housed at the Department. President Gardner informed the Board that Douglas County is also struggling with communication with the Department and concluded the item by noting that it is important to pursue an effective resolution considering that "pennies are precious" especially during the county budget development cycle.

Updates from Standing Committees:

13. **NACO Legislative Committee.** President Elect Andriola informed the Board that the Committee had recently resumed regular meetings after a break following the legislative session. She directed the Board's attention to the backup contained in the agenda packet and thanked Jennifer for developing the document that gives an overview of the process and timeline for the submission of Bill Draft Requests (BDRs) for the 2027 Legislative Session. President Elect Andriola informed the Board that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on March 6th at 11:00 a.m. and asked that any topics for BDRs be sent to Jennifer to coordinate for discussion by the Committee. Jennifer thanked President Elect Andriola for her thorough report and reiterated that any BDR topic requests should be sent to herself and Vinson for vetting prior to being presented to the Committee. Commissioner Helming asked if there was an internal deadline for topic submission, and President Elect Andriola noted that the sooner topics are submitted the more time staff and the Committee will have for vetting and discussion.

President Gardner concluded the item by reminding the Board that the 15 rural counties each have one BDR and that the 2 urban counties receive two.

14. **NACO Committee of the Emeritus.** President Gardner informed the Board that Past President Andreozzi had to step out of the meeting for a medical appointment. Vinson informed the Board that the Committee had met that morning and held a robust discussion on ideas for the annual conference workshops, including a session on meeting management for newer Commissioners. He also reminded the Board that Douglas County would be hosting the conference in September. Vinson informed the Board that Joni Eastley had suggested a session on how counties can work on obtaining unclaimed property housed by the State Treasurer, noting that it is fairly straightforward process and had produced a decent amount of revenue for Nye County in the past. Vinson concluded the item by informing the Board that the next meeting of the Committee will take place on April 24th.
15. **NACO Committee on Housing.** Vinson informed the Board that the first meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 20th at 11:00 a.m., and calendar invitations will be sent to those who have communicated their desire to serve on the Committee.
16. **NACO Committee on Cooperative Extension.** Vinson informed the Board that the first meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 3rd at 1:00 p.m., and calendar invitations will be sent to those who have communicated their desire to serve on the Committee.
17. **Update and Possible Action. Regarding Public Lands and Natural Resources Issues Affecting Counties Including:**
 - a. **Updates from the NACO Public Lands and Natural Resources Subcommittee.** Commissioner Tipton informed the Board that the Committee had met the previous day and had been given an overview of the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference and discussed the recent approval of Secure Rural Schools (SRS) payments to counties and the timeline that affected counties should receive the payments. The Committee also discussed and approved agenda item b. The Committee also discussed a legislative proposal for Nevada to be designated as an outdoor recreation destination and developments regarding the Greater Sage Grouse. Vinson informed the Board that good information on the royalty payments to counties allotted for on renewable energy projects was received, directed their attention to supplemental materials in the agenda packet on the SRS payments, and he also noted that the National Center for Public Lands is getting up and going and is working on tying SRS and PILT payments to things Eastern states find important, which will be beneficial to future Congressional approvals for both programs. Vinson also noted that engagement on the ROD for the implementation of the Greater Sage Grouse plans is important. Jeremy Drew, from Resource Concepts Inc., informed the Board that he had taken part in the initial NACo Renewable Energy Academy and that the content was heavily geared towards the writing of effective ordinances and other related topics. He also informed the Board that he had attended the recent Interim Legislative Committee on Natural Resources where Lincoln County had given a presentation and noted that the recording of the meeting and presentation could be found online. Mr. Drew next discussed the previously discussed lack of federal funding for gathers of wild horses, which was followed almost immediately by an announcement of an emergency gather in White Pine County and proposals for emergency gathers in Lander and Nye counties. He also discussed the implementation of the ROD regarding the Greater Sage Grouse and noted that even the BLM had yet to be briefed and echoed Vinson's statement that engagement is important and that he would be looking to ensure a seat at the table

when the rural county briefing takes place. Mr. Drew also discussed the publication of new NEPA regulations and noted that he saw nothing drastic, but that they will speed up the timeline for project approvals and that it is important for counties to obtain cooperating agency status as it will be critical for future engagement. He also informed the Board that the State had sent a list of 50 proposed renewable energy projects to the Department of the Interior for review and that word had just been received that 15 projects from the list would be moving forward, he also informed the Board that he would continue to communicate with NACO staff and the Board as additional information is received.

- b. **Possible Approval of Letter of Support and Recommendation for Former NACO President and Lincoln County Commissioner, Varlin Higbee, to Serve on the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board.** The Board was informed that Mr. Higbee would like to continue serving on the Board. He thanked the Board for their support and reminded them that he has served on the Board for the past three years and while a lot has been accomplished, a lot more work needs to be done on the issue. He also informed the Board that the group intends to work on a reorganization including the charter that governs its activities. Recommendation and support for Mr. Higbee's continued service on the Board was approved on a motion by Commissioner Tipton with second by President Elect Andriola.
 - c. **Update on Baker Ranches vs. Haaland Amicus Brief.** Mr. Drew reminded the Board that the case is regarding water rights in Eastern Nevada, the Great Basin National Park, and the diversion of those water rights from the ranch. He also discussed the ruling in case being important to the status of water rights that had been established prior to 1942. He informed the Board that the case is scheduled for a hearing the week of March 23rd in San Diego and that he was planning on being in attendance and would give the Board an update at the next meeting. President Gardner discussed the importance of the continued reauthorization of the SRS and PILT programs, thanking Vice President Keller and Commissioner Strickland for their engagement on the issues. He also thanked Jennifer for completing the spreadsheet that shows what each county should receive for both programs and encouraged the Board to ensure that county fiscal staff is aware of what the payments should be so they can be sure the counties are receiving the proper revenues. Vice President Keller also noted that for the counties that receive SRS revenues that ½ of the payments are designated for transportation and that the funding can be earmarked for roads, given that road maintenance is an important discussion in all the counties.
18. **Updates from Members of the National Association of Counties Board, Western Interstate Region Board, and Individual Counties.** President Gardner informed the Board that a NACo Board of Directors meeting was held at the Legislative Conference and that 40 Interim Policy Resolutions had been presented to the Board by the individual Policy Steering Committees for consideration. Of the 40, 39 were approved by the Board, and one will be brought back to the NACo Board for consideration at the Annual Conference in July. He also encouraged the Board to consider applying for the NACo Achievement Awards that will be announced in July and noted that the application deadline is at the end of March. President Gardner also encouraged the Board to consider making plans for the participation in the annual Green Light for Veterans initiative held in November. He noted that the Legislative Conference was a great event overall and requested that the Board note on their calendars that the 2027 WIR conference would be held in Douglas County at the Tahoe Blue Events Center. Commissioner Tipton informed the Board that he had been unable to attend the Legislative Conference but would be attending upcoming WIR meetings and would provide an update to the Board at the next meeting. Staff also informed the Board that the

Rural Action Caucus would be added to the agenda item as Vice President Keller was selected as the Vice Chair for the Caucus. The Board members also gave updates on items of importance within their individual counties.

19. **Public Comment.** Holly Gatzke from University of Nevada, Reno Extension informed the Board that Extension would be participating at the upcoming State Fair, that good discussions had taken place during the recent Wildfire Summit and that they have grant funds available for Wildfire Adapted Community plans. She also informed the Board that Extension is working with Bob Potts on infusing software into their workforce program in Clark County which will help coaching efforts and identify interests and skills to increase the submission of successful job applications for program participants as well as connect to post-secondary education opportunities. Ms. Gatzke also informed the Board that Extension intends to expand the updated programing statewide following its initial implementation in Clark County.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.