

# NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (NACO)

Board of Directors' Meeting

January 23, 2026, 9:30am

**NACO Conference Room**

**304 S. Minnesota Street**

**Carson City, NV 89703**

## ADOPTED MINUTES

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

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m.

1. **Public Comment.** None was given.
2. **Approval of Agenda.** The agenda was approved on a motion by Vice President Andriola with second by Past President Giomi.
3. **Investiture of the 2026 NACO Officers.** The investiture of the 2026 NACO Officers was conducted by retired Senior Carson City Judge John Tatro. Douglas County Commissioner Mark Gardner took the oath of office as President, Washoe County Commissioner Clara Andriola took the oath of office as President Elect, and Lyon County Commissioner Keller took the oath of office as Vice President.
4. **NACO President's Report.** President Gardner thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as President, remarked on the distinguished list of NACO Presidents including many from Douglas County and noted that Former Commissioner and 2011 NACO President Doug Johnson currently serves on the Emeritus Committee, remarking on the importance of maintain institutional knowledge. He discussed his theme for the year noting that counties are stronger together and that during his first year on the Board when Commissioner Kirkpatrick was President, he learned that respect for individual counties was as important as commonality. He noted that it is important to respect counties' unique issues while recognizing commonalities and advocating for the whole. President Gardner discussed the vast accomplishments across Nevada's counties and encouraged submission for the National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards given at their annual conference. He also highlighted the NACo Operation Green Light campaign and its history to honor veterans and encouraged registration for the upcoming NACo Legislative Conference. President Gardner also informed the Board that he had attended the President's and Executive's fly-in earlier in the month and discussed the new *We are Counties* initiative by NACo which is a two year \$3M dollar campaign by NACo. He announced the appointment of Commissioner Tipton and President Elect Andriola as Chairs of the Public Lands and Natural Resources and Legislative Subcommittees, respectively, and encouraged investigating partnerships with legislators on county initiatives to leverage the non-

partisan status of NACO to advance county policy priorities at the legislature. He also discussed the 2026 NACO Annual Conference being hosted by Douglas County at the Tahoe Blue event center and encouraged county staff to take advantage of both NACO and NACo resources. He concluded his report by sharing a quote he felt would benefit Commissioners as they navigate often unpleasant constituent communications: “You never win an argument on the day of the argument.” He then encouraged them to practice strategic patience.

5. **NACO Executive Director’s Report.** Vinson congratulated the newly installed Officers and thanked them for their service to NACO. He reminded the Board of the upcoming NACO Legislative Conference in Washington DC, thanking Storey County for their sponsorship of the dinner to be hosted on Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. Vinson also remarked on the robust content the schedule holds for the Conference and informed the Board that both he and Jennifer would be in attendance. Vinson discussed the workshop on AB211 and how receivership is a tool that can help counties to address neighborhood blight, held earlier in the month. He informed the Board that a recording of the workshop could be found on the NACO website and thanked the bill Sponsor and speakers as well as Jennifer for the work she completed on organizing the event, noting that it was well attended. Vinson next discussed the Fuel Resiliency Committee recently formed by Governor Lombardo to reduce Nevada’s reliance on fuels from other states, informing them that he had been appointed to the Committee by the Governor and noted that it is good that NACO and counties will have representation on the Committee. Vinson informed the Board that staff had led a call with County Managers and fiscal staff regarding the Board direction to address CTAX distribution discrepancies. He informed the Board that a lot of data had been received and the next step would be to have the Department of Taxation give a presentation to the Board. Supervisor Giomi inquired as to whether there would be more value in having the presentation in a symposium style and Vinson stated that County Managers and fiscal staff would be invited to the meeting as previous town halls on the subject had spurred questions that he anticipated would be answered during the presentation. Past President Andreozzi noted that the issue is of great importance and questioned where the parameters of a Board meeting would allow for the deep dive the matter requires. He echoed the Supervisor’s inquiry for a separate discussion or suggesting a clearer Board agenda to allow for the time the discussion will need. President Gardner discussed a presentation his Board of Commissioners received and noted that equitable treatment is important.
6. **Approval of Minutes of December 12, 2025, NACO Board of Directors Meeting.** The minutes were approved as presented on a motion by President Elect Andriola with second by Past President Andreozzi. Commissioner Tipton informed the Board that his vote was in form only as he missed the previous meeting.
7. **Discussion and Possible Approval of NACO’s 2026 Federal Priorities.** Jennifer directed the Board members’ attention to the draft document included in the agenda packet for their consideration. She reminded the Board that the document is updated annually and is an important resource for communication with the Washington Delegation. Jennifer informed the Board that the portions highlighted in yellow indicate added content and noted that the content is also informed by the National Association of Counties (NACo) Federal Policy platform. She then gave an overview of the new documents and updated content, noting that the common theme throughout the document is coordination with counties. Past President Andreozzi commented on the portion of page one that referred to direct assistance for mental health response, noting that the funding under the CARES and ARPA legislation is defunct. Amy informed the Board that the portion was left in the document to signal that the funding packages were helpful but acknowledged that no funding is being

received and informed the Board that she will refresh the language to acknowledge the depletion of the funding. Vinson also pointed out that the language pointed to the importance of direct funding to local government. Past President Andreozzi then inquired as to if the entirety of the Health and Human Services portion on the second page was in relation to the \$180 million the State is expected to receive. Amy stated that yes, the section is regarding H.R.1 and is meant to express thanks for the funding, but also to call out the limitations of the funding and the fact that it is not sustainable. She also noted that the section includes support for continuation of the provider tax that requires private hospitals to tax themselves in order to receive matching federal funds to improve Medicaid sustainability. This program will be phased down as a part of H.R.1.. Amy noted that the Provider Tax was only recently instituted in Nevada, but through agreement with the state and the Nevada Hospital Association, a portion would be dedicated to Children's Behavioral Health. Reduction of the Provider Tax reduces funds available for that effort. Past President Andreozzi discussed the fact that jails are not the place to provide proper mental health treatment, suggesting that the use of empty honor camps may be an avenue to explore for inpatient care of the justice involved. Commissioner Kirkpatrick agreed with Past President Andreozzi's point, stating that Washington needs to give flexible funding to address the need for 'out of the box' solutions such as a rural Lakes Crossing facility. President Elect Andriola agreed, using the example of the grant funded program at Washoe County's Parr Blvd. jail that is successful because of non-profit partnerships and stressed that jails are not where mental health services should be administered by law enforcement trained staff. Jennifer stated that adjustments would be made to the sections regarding mental health response to include direct funding to counties. President Gardner reiterated that directing funding to counties is important and that widespread funding does not address the issue effectively. Past President Andreozzi then suggested changing the renewable energy phrasing under the Public Lands and Natural Resources portion to energy production, noting that referencing renewables seemed to narrow of a focus. Supervisor Giomi inquired why the change was suggested, and if other forms of energy were included. Vinson stated that renewable energy could include nuclear energy, and for that reason the intent was to make the item broad, shadowing the NACo document. President Gardner informed the Board that he had brought copies of NACo's Federal Priorities for the entire Board. The 2026 Federal Priorities were approved pending the inclusion of the edits discussed on a motion by Past President Andreozzi with second by Supervisor Giomi.

8. **Review and Possible Approval of the NACO 2026 County Directory.** Amanda directed the Board's attention to the draft directory in the agenda packet. She explained that the update process begins in late fall and that the individual county pages had been sent to the county administration offices for review, requesting that the Board members reach out to her directly with any edits. President Gardner remarked as to how many members of the Board were Chairs of their individual Commissions. Vinson drew the Board's attention to the redesign of the Directory and informed them that the approval request was to honor the work that staff puts into the document each year. The 2026 County Directory was approved on a motion by President Elect Andriola with second by Vice President Keller.
9. **Presentation from the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN), Regarding the America the Entrepreneurial Initiative, Doug Erwin, SVP Entrepreneurial Development, EDAWN.** Mr. Erwin thanked the Board for their time and gave an overview of his experience in economic development. He began his presentation by explaining the initiative and its creation by AB77, sponsored by Speaker Yeager during the 2023 Legislative Session in partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED). Mr. Erwin noted that small companies create most jobs and that it is important to level the playing field for the creation of smaller companies given the

incentives that large companies receive for relocation and expansion. He explained that the support of counties is important because counties influence or control zoning, permitting, licensing etc., thereby lowering or eliminating the burden of small business entrepreneurship. He informed the Board that Nevada was the first State to enact the Initiative and explained that he would like Nevada to be the first State to have buy-in from all counties, going over a list of ideas on how counties can support the Initiative and introducing a QR code for a toolkit counties can utilize. Mr. Erwin announced that the Initiative would officially be announced at the EDAWN State of the Economy event on February 5<sup>th</sup>, to generate energy for the year-long campaign. Past President Andreozzi inquired as to if presentations could be made to the individual county commissions and the Board was informed that the other Rural Development Authorities are on board with the campaign. Commissioner Helming inquired as to what assistance would be provided to small business owners, giving examples of hurdles she had experienced opening her own small business. Mr. Erwin stated that there are toolkits available, and the streamlining of licensing requirements and fees would be important, noting that Nevada is a high fee State because there are no income taxes giving the example that Washoe County could remove a notary fee that is not required under NRS; further explaining that 60% of the population wants to open a business but only 2% do because of costs and complications. Commissioner Kirkpatrick expressed frustration with the assertion that high county fees are the major barrier to entrepreneurship. She explained that a person that had difficulty with \$25 fees would not be in a position to open a longstanding successful business and further explained that there are resources available to assist entrepreneurs like Extension which provides information on demographics etc. that are extremely useful in determining the appropriate location for a new business, having a much larger impact on potential success than the elimination of fees or regulations. Commissioner Kirkpatrick used the example of the success of Made in Nevada and noted that it is not leveraged by economic development groups and stated that counties have services to provide that cost money that fees pay for and regulatory requirements are often tied to items like public health and important infrastructure. Mr. Erwin explained that the initiative is not just about lowering fees but recognizing the power of entrepreneurship, noting the robust northern program and that his example of high fees was based on fee rates across the nation. Commissioner Tolbert noted that challenges are more about regulations than fees, and that most small businesses start out as passions or hobbies. He explained that Douglas County has an organization that takes economic vitality funding and gives loans at lower interest rates to assist start up business. He also urged the need to consider the failure rate of new businesses. Mr. Erwin thanked the Board for their comments, noting that conversation is important and part of what the initiative is about. President Gardner informed the Board that his Commission had requested their Economic Vitality Manager create a toolkit specific to Douglas County to assist people interested in starting a business navigate the process. He also inquired as to if Mr. Erwin had a specific date, he was looking for proclamations. Mr. Erwin stated that he could organize a date, and it would be great to push the Initiative on social media platforms for further marketing and communication, acknowledging that a universal date would provide greater leverage. He also stated that they are coordinating with the Main Street programs across the State. Commissioner Perez stated that the cost of insurance is a challenge for start-up companies and recommended resources like the Small Business Development Center and the communications available with EDAWN members.

10. **Update from NACO Health and Human Services Manager.** Amy drew the Board's attention to the flyer for the symposium being held in February regarding the community reinvestment program, which requires all of Nevada's Medicaid Managed Care Organizations to invest a percentage of their profits back into the communities they serve. She also discussed the upcoming workshop series on Rural child welfare and specifically

highlighted the third of the planned workshops that will center around youth parole and alternative placement, noting that it was an opportunity for collaborative solutions as many of the county Juvenile Probation Officers had registered for attendance. Amy also reminded the Board of the State hosting a workshop the following week on the Rural Health Transformation Grant and informed them that the grant has opportunities for specific dollars called out for emergency medical services within the State's plan, as well as specific initiatives regarding technology and workforce pipeline supports. Past President Andreozzi reiterated that any entity can submit a plan for the funding and noted the importance of having a strategic plan for the best use of the available dollars instead of diluting the funds. He also suggested focusing the funds on plans for "home grown" medical professionals, highlighting the challenges of recruitment from outside the state. Supervisor Giomi informed the Board that he is aware of several groups joining forces for application and stressed the importance of regional organization. He discussed the PACE program as a potential benefit to communities that moves Medicaid and Medicare dollars away from nursing homes and allows seniors to stay in their homes, by providing transport to medical care among other services. Supervisor Giomi reiterated that the program is not currently in Nevada, but it is being worked on with the Nevada Health Authority and may be a good collaborative use of the funding. He also reminded the Board that any plans must be new, and it would be important that the program be sustainable following the five years of funding within the Grant. It was also discussed that scholarships for medical professionals are an allowable use of the funding, and Amy stated that she would be happy to provide support to counties should they need assistance coordinating with partners. Supervisor Giomi closed the item by informing the Board that he would check on the eligibility of for-profit hospitals to apply for the funding and get back to the Board with the information.

**11. 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.**

Jeremy Drew from Resource Concepts Inc., informed the Board that Chase McNamara from the Governor's office was leaving his position to take a post with the Army National Guard and that Gracie Garret was named as his replacement. He discussed their attendance at the previous day's meeting. Mr. Drew discussed recent developments surrounding the Greater Sage Grouse and the Record of Decision (ROD) that was released in December. He noted that the ROD was better than the previous version but not as favorable as the 2019 version. Mr. Drew also informed the Board that there would be opportunities for closing some gaps within the implementation phase and that there was litigation expected. He also discussed the advancement of renewable energy transmission projects on federal lands but noted that production projects are currently on hold. He also discussed wild horse and burro issues, noting that he confirmed that the current Continuing Resolution does not have funding for gathers and that there are no planned gathers in 2026, expressing concern that the population is expected to rise to 3X the Appropriate Management Level based upon a new foal crop and drought conditions. Commissioner Helming inquired as to why the State Department of Wildlife does not step in for help with range management, and Mr. Drew clarified that they do not have authority. Legal remedies and issues with long term holding were also discussed as continuing barriers to addressing the problem. He also noted that there is always funding available for emergency gathers if public safety becomes an issue. Mr. Drew also informed the Board that the interim natural resources committee would be meeting in February and that Lincoln County would be presenting on their Pinion Juniper project. He concluded the item by informing the Board that a 60-day

comment period was open for a Secretarial Order from the Department of the Interior regarding improving access to hunting and fishing.

- b. **Federal Agency Comment Letters, Including, but not limited to The Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS).** Mr. Drew informed the Board that there were several comment letters that were due between the December and January meetings and directed their attention to the items included in the agenda packet. He discussed the four different dockets under the ESA and informed the Board that the submitted letters were supported by comments previously approved in 2019. Mr. Drew noted that the letters were generally supportive and that the same was true of the letter submitted regarding WOTUS, which was also based in part on previously approved comments. He also informed the Board that the WOTUS document was in tune with the Sacket decision from the Supreme Court and that additional guidance was requested. Mr. Drew concluded the item by informing the Board that the anticipation for the final rule release was prior to the March meeting of the Board. Commissioner Tipton thanked Mr. Drew for providing the update on his behalf.

#### **Updates from Standing Committees:**

12. **NACO Legislative Committee.** Jennifer informed the Board that she was looking forward to working with the Committee and reminded them that monthly meetings would begin on the first Friday of February. She noted that she would be utilizing the same distribution list from the Legislative Session and that she would incorporate additions and removals as requested. She discussed the need to begin the process for Bill Draft Request recommendations to present to the Board for approval prior to the submission deadline in September. President Gardner thanked those who would be participating on the interim committee and noted the importance of continuing State funding for the China Spring facility and encouraged the Board members and county staff participation on the Committee.
13. **NACO Committee of the Emeritus.** Vinson reminded the Board that Past President Andreozzi was new Chair of the Committee and informed them that the next meeting would take place in February and that work was underway on the first quarterly workshop sponsored by the Committee.

Items 14 and 15 were combined for discussion purposes.

14. **NACO Committee on Housing.**
15. **NACO Committee on Cooperative Extension.**

Vinson reminded the Board that the Committees were approved during their December meeting to leverage resources and best practices for housing from the urban areas and share local level successes and programs from Extension. He stressed that Committee membership was not just for Board members, and that interested Commissioners and staff were welcome to participate. He informed the Board that another notice would be sent regarding the dollars available to the rural counties for housing and Commissioner Kirkpatrick reminded them that she worked hard to ensure the inclusion of those dollars specified for the rural communities and that NACo has a list of rural developers that are putting together options. She also noted that she believes in Extension but that they can do a better job with their existing and proposed programming, stressing that they cannot simply rely on county dollars, that the State and the University have funding available to support the important program and the Committee will be able to push the envelope for other resources. Commissioner Kirkpatrick also mentioned a

collaboration on healthcare which Amy was unaware of, and she concluded the item by noting that it would be important for Director DeDecker to be involved with the Extension Committee and not simply rely on staff for updates.

16. **Updates from Members of the National Association of Counties Board, Western Interstate Region Board, and Individual Counties.** President Gardner informed the Board that the next meeting of the NACo Board of Directors would be held at the upcoming Legislative Conference and referred to the previously discussed policy booklet. Commissioner Tipton informed the Board that the most recent meeting of the WIR Board was centered around preparations for the Legislative Conference and pushing for yearly funding of Secure Rural Schools and a new PILT funding process. He also informed the Board that discussions were held regarding the proposed WOTUS rule and possible amendments to the Greater Sage Grouse ROD. Members of the Board gave updates on activities within their counties.

17. **Public Comment.** None was given.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.