



STOREY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020 10:00 A.M.

DISTRICT COURTROOM
26 SOUTH B STREET, VIRGINIA CITY, NEVADA

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

MARSHALL MCBRIDE
CHAIRMAN
ATTORNEY

ANNE LANGER
DISTRICT

JAY CARMONA
VICE-CHAIRMAN

LANCE GILMAN
COMMISSIONER
TREASURER

VANESSA STEPHENS
CLERK-

ROLL CALL: Chairman McBride, Vice Chairman Carmona, Commissioner Gilman, County Manager Austin Osborne, District Attorney Anne Langer, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Dore Nevin, Fire Chief Jeff Nevin, Tourism Director Deny Dotson, Emergency Management Director Joe Curtis, Interim Comptroller Jennifer McCain, HR/Administrative Officer Jen Chapman

1. CALL TO ORDER SPECIAL MEETING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

Meeting was called to order by Chairman McBride at 11:00 A.M.

2. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: Approval of Special Meeting Agenda for March 17, 2020.
Public Comment: None

Motion: I move to approve the Special Meeting Agenda for March 17, 2020, **Action:** Approve, **Moved by:** Vice Chairman Carmona, **Seconded by:** Commissioner Gilman, **Vote:** Motion carried by unanimous vote, **(Summary:** Yes=3)

3. BOARD COMMENT (No Action - No Public Comment): None

4. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: Approval of Resolution No. 20-568 declaring an emergency due to COVID 19.

Emergency Management Director Joe Curtis explained that as of this moment there are no reported COVID 19 cases in Storey County. This does not mean there will not be some in the future. Storey County participates in the Quad-County, multi-agency - Carson City, Lyon, Douglas, and Storey counties - all work closely with Carson City Health & Human Services Department relating to all types of emergencies in the Quad-County area. Particularly with COVID 19 outbreak. Residents, businesses, and industry in the County are major concerns with the potential effects on businesses in Virginia City and the industrial park.

Mr. Curtis said the Storey County Emergency Management team has pursued a number of prudent, preventative mitigation measures to stop the spread of COVID 19 in to Storey County. Recommendations are being made based on information obtained from the State Health Department, Quad County Health Coalition, the CDC, and other resources. As well as measures taken in neighboring counties. Decisions have not come easy and are difficult. It is recognized there is a major impact on business and county government.

- Large attendance events have been cancelled with more events that may be cancelled through the end of April.
- Congregate meals have been cancelled at the Senior Center. "Meals on Wheels" will continue to operate as normal to insure seniors are cared for. In Virginia City, lunch will be available for seniors 60+ by "drive thru" - Monday through Friday, 12 to 1PM. Delivery can be arranged.
- Meetings have been held with Department Heads to consider continuation of services plans, to prepare for reduced staffing, and to look at ways to do that.
- There have been staffing issues as a result of schools being closed. Local and TRI businesses are also reporting issues.
- Closing of Storey County businesses is a major concern. The County Manager and Department heads have discussed this at length. Recommendations for other methods, rather than closing, is counter-productive for their resilience and to the County. This is something the County is looking at daily and hourly.
- The County has been in contact with many businesses in TRI - including AUECC, Tesla, Pittsburgh Paints, and Studio 6 Hotel. Businesses have been asking what the plans are for the County. Optional mitigation methods are being considered. These are businesses that can't be "just shut down". Storey County has a unique situation with TRI that must be considered.
- The Quad County have agreed to participate in a fully funded "drive-by swab pod station". FEMA and the Federal Government is putting this together. Mr. Curtis reviewed the types of "pod stations".
- It is likely that a pod station will be set up next week in Carson City to service the four counties - Carson, Douglas, Lyon, and Storey. Certain criteria must be met after interview in order to be tested.

Mr. Curtis discussed what needs to be done to declare a "state of emergency" in the County. The Federal and State governments have declared National and State emergencies providing opportunities for funds from FEMA. When the County declares a State of Emergency, it opens the door for reimbursement of up to 75% of the County's costs in mitigating and dealing with the emergency. 25% is what the County takes on - there are ways to mitigate costs down so it does not involve a lot of actual dollars.

The County must declare an emergency in order to acquire FEMA dollars stating that an emergency exists related to the COVID 19 virus situation. All surrounding counties are in the process and have already declared emergencies.

Storey County would possibly help administer and coordinate the pod/swab station in Carson. This would be part of the County's in-kind involvement in order to get money back from FEMA.

Mr. Curtis read proposed Resolution:

This is Resolution No.20-568, a Resolution declaring an emergency due to COVID 19
Whereas, NRS 414.090 authorizes the formation of County emergency management organizations; and

Whereas, Storey County has created Storey County Emergency Management as set forth in Storey County Code, Chapter 2.20; and

Whereas, Storey County Code section 2.20.030 authorizes the declaration of an emergency

whenever it is considered necessary; and
Whereas, the Center for Disease Control and prevention (CDC) has identified a new respiratory illness, which it has named Corona Virus Disease 2019, or COVID 19; and
Whereas, the World Health Organization has declared that COVID 19 is a global pandemic; &
Whereas, Donald Trump, President of the United States, declared on March 13th 2020 that Covid 19 constitutes a National Emergency under the Stafford Act and has authorized FEMA to provide assistance to State and local governments; and
Whereas, Steven Sisolak, Governor of the State of Nevada, has also declared that COVID 19 constitutes an emergency in the State of Nevada, and
Whereas, the neighboring states of California, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Arizona have all declared states of emergency in light of the presence of COVID 19 in their states; and
Whereas, COVID 19 has been identified as present in the neighboring counties of Washoe and Carson City, and
Whereas COVID 19 is an easily transmittable virus which causes death and disease, and constitutes an immediate hazard to the health and welfare of the residents of Storey County, visitors to Storey County and to those persons working in Storey County; and
Whereas, NRS 241.040 authorizes Boards of County Commissioners to take an action without the requirement of three working days advance notice when an emergency exists; and
Whereas, emergency action is necessary to protect public health, safety, and in and around Storey County;
Now, therefore, it is hereby declared that a state of emergency exists in Storey County, and that the County Manager, in conjunction with Department Heads and County Officials, are authorized to take whatever actions are necessary to prevent, mitigate, and/or contain the spread of Covid 19 as may be appropriate and available, including requesting assistance from the State of Nevada.

Chairman McBride asked if Lockwood residents would have to go to Carson City - would they be able to go Reno/Washoe County?

Mr. Curtis said yes, they could. Pods will also be set up there.

Public Comment:

Nicole Barde, Storey County resident: Understands this is an on-going plan - it was mentioned that school closures already impact staffing. She read that buses, instead of picking up children, will be delivering meals to kids. Is this an issue in Storey - is this something we will be doing? Do we have the tests to do drive by? Where do merchants go and/or look to, to get economic support/relief?

Chairman McBride commented that the President, and others, are discussing how to get "dollars" into pockets of individuals. This will take legislation through Congress, which will take time - if, and when, they do it.

Joe Curtis: Has talked to Todd Hess regarding providing food to school kids - they are considering it. There is access to buses, if needed. This (need) is not seen at this time. It's impressive to hear that the school system has a one-to-one ratio of laptop computers for kids in all the schools. There is a plan to have children work from home.

Testing cannot be done in every small community, so it is regionalized. They will come here with a small pod, 2,000 test pieces, along with 20-25 medical personnel. The percentage of people that will show a need to be tested is very low - it is only given to individuals who pass an interview process that establishes the criteria to be tested. A large pod would bring up to 40 personnel.

The first equipment is going to California and Washington. There will be no cost to Storey County.

There will be a webinar for businesses every day for several weeks. This will be a way for all businesses to find out the processes needed to help in dealing with difficulties in maintaining their business. That's one option.

Chairman McBride: SBA will give out low interest loans, not grants, which will have to be paid back. This is one reason we want to keep Storey County operational. As a Board, are we going to determine what is a viable business? Any business owner you talk to thinks they need to operate.

Mr. Curtis: Businesses he has talked have said they will make any adjustments they need to make in order to continue operation. They do not want to be closed down.

Chairman McBride: The most recent stats he has seen - say that between 98 and 99% of those who pose symptoms, tests come back negative. It's a very small number of people who contract the virus. The people most affected will be those with compromised systems and the elderly. Most people will survive this.

Mr. Curtis: He understands this as well. We want to get information out to all the businesses.

Commissioner Gilman: He defers to Superintendent Hess and the directive. He believes the schools will be providing lunches with a drive-by program at the schools. He has associated with a private foundation that has committed to deliver food to both senior community centers - to the extent food is available. The "backpack" program is also continuing.

Vice Chairman Carmona commented that hand-sanitation stations have been put out on the boardwalk. Compliments to everyone associated with this - we have done what we think we can to keep the "boardwalk" busy. People are in survival mode right now and not looking to do touristy things. Let's hope this is over and done with as soon as possible.

Mr. Curtis said, along with Public Works, numerous calls have been made to obtain hand sanitation materials to be handed out - there is nothing available.

Deny Dotson, Tourism Director: Our messaging in Virginia City is to drive traffic. All current marketing messages were stopped on Friday. A different type of message will be put out starting this afternoon and will be local based. (VCTC) staff are going out to determine who's changed their business model, on-line sales, curb delivery, and whatever they can do to stay open. This message will be distributed locally today. Self-guided tours through use of mobile apps will be promoted - things to promote Virginia City and support the locals. This could change, however the information put out over the last several days is based on sound advice from the professionals.

Mr. Dotson explained he has been in contact with several event promoters. He concurs with the CDC suggestion of a 60-day postponement. There are a lot of dates available and there is time to adjust the calendar. The Rural Round-Up event is not lost, it is scheduled in October. Pipers will be closed for a while - allowing for some spring cleaning and needed up-dates.

Mr. Osborne: There are different components on how to serve businesses, residents, and employees in the County. Monday was a minimal staff day - sending people home who are non-emergency response. This allowed department heads and emergency response team to put together an operation plan for the next week or longer.

- The goal is to maintain County services while maintaining the health and safety of employees, residents, and people coming into the building for services;

- To comply with NRS regarding statutory offices and services, an IEP has been developed for each office. Monday through Friday operations will continue, with the following caveats:
 - Sick employees must stay home;
 - Non-essential meetings, gatherings, travel, trainings, are cancelled until further notice.
- Public Works has increased sanitation throughout the building
- Remote meetings are being set up as much as possible. People are being encouraged to attend, such as the up-coming Planning Commission meeting, by virtual meeting.
- Gatherings of over 50 will be cancelled or amended to be less people.
- Social distancing.
- Fire Marshal's across the State are enforcing 50% capacity of buildings.
- The County is working specifically with people who have health issues or live with someone who has a compromised health issue, ADA, child care, or other issues to provide a way for them to continue working in a way that doesn't put themselves or others at risk.
- On-line bill pay is being encouraged.
- People should call in with questions for Courthouse staff - including questions about payments, etc.
- Policies and procedures are being reviewed looking at areas that may be updated regarding pandemic matters.
- Hiring and spending freeze for non-essential items are being looked at in order to prepare for any budgetary considerations that may be needed, depending on how long the situation lasts.
- Businesses and the VCTC group are being promoted, as well as TRI. The entire team has been on C Street and social media, as well as visiting and calling individuals to inform where we are and what to expect.
- As heard earlier, Storey County senior services, the food program and drive-by food service are happening at the Virginia City and Lockwood Senior Centers. There are ride programs if you need groceries, need to go to a doctor, get prescriptions, etc.

Motion: I, Jay Carmona, move to Approve of Resolution No. 20-568 declaring an emergency due to COVID 19, **Action:** Approve, **Moved by:** Vice Chairman Carmona, **Seconded by:** Commissioner Gilman, **Vote:** Motion carried by unanimous vote, **(Summary:** Yes=3)

Commissioner Gilman commented he just received information that the SBA has declared the following counties in Nevada as an economic disaster - all the counties we have discussed, including Storey County. More information is on the SBA webpage at, <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>, There is SBA money available today in the County for businesses having financial challenges.

Mr. Osborne said our team, through Rad Strategies, has been posting (information). We will add this information to the postings to let our businesses know this is available.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (No Action)

6. ADJOURNMENT OF ALL ACTIVE AND RECESSED BOARDS ON THE AGENDA

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 11:45 AM
Respectfully submitted,

By: _____
Vanessa Stephens Clerk-Treasurer