

MINUTES OF THE COALITION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

155 N. Taylor Street, Fallon, NV 89406

June 17, 2021

Call to Order:

The special meeting of the Coalition for Senior Citizens was called to order at 4:03 PM on June 17, 2021.

Roll Call:

PRESENT: Member Jill Manha, Chair
Member Robbie Lind, Vice-Chair
Member Jamie Hyde, Treasurer
Commissioner Justin Heath
Councilwoman Karla Kent
Member Julie Richards
Member Carol Seitzinger
Executive Director Lisa Erquiaga
Deputy Clerk to the Board Pamela D. Moore

ABSENT: N/A

Public Comments:

Chair Manha asked if there was any public comment. Carl Erquiaga said I am shocked at the actions this board took on Friday, June 11th, giving in to the county's demand to take over the Pennington Life Center, all of your grants and, no doubt, at some point, your assets valued at nearly \$1M. You should not be giving in to this takeover and the effective neutering of your board. In forcing this change, the county is giving you all a vote of no confidence. They are saying you have not done your job and you are not qualified to continue. If you really care about your staff and people you serve, you should not be accepting this sitting down and allowing it to happen. You should be hiring legal counsel and trying to stop them. The number and veracity of the comments from the seniors you received Friday should have been enough to give you direction to stand up for them and yourselves. Your character has been attacked and your reputations are deteriorating.

I have heard and seen comments that this takeover has been talked about for years. I understand one Coalition Board member is spreading it to the seniors as if it will make them feel better. I can say that, in my 12 years on the Commission, there was never a serious public discussion of bringing the senior center under the county, mainly because of the cost of bringing on all of those employees. Some Commission members, in particular, have fought almost every single attempt to hire even one new full-time employee in any department because of the cost. Now, they are welcoming the addition of up to 20 employees.

When the William N. Pennington Life Center was opened, there was an attempt by the county to

make this Coalition pay \$60,000 a year in rent as part of the lease on the building. Did you know that? That is right; they were going to provide funding to operate with city/county tax rate and then take \$5,000 per month back into the General Fund. Fortunately, that was dropped after some push-back, mostly from your current Director.

This takeover is nothing more than an empire building exercise within the county. There is no reason to cause this huge upheaval. If it was a real plan, with honest intentions, it would not have happened behind closed doors. I have it on good authority that this has been the plan of one individual empire builder, in particular. That staff member has apparently had their sights set on taking the senior center and eliminating your Director since the new building was opened four years ago. I find the dismay and shock displayed by the Coalition Board and the Commission over the backlash to be disingenuous, feigned if you will. What were you expecting when this plan was dropped on the public, seniors, and WNP staff last Monday? Did you think it would be greeted with open arms? People are concerned – concerned for their jobs, concerned for their future, concerned that the quality of services will be diminished, concerned that something has been hidden from them by their leaders. To be surprised at this concern seems like an act. Is it naivete, is it fake, or is just arrogance? The county has dug in their heels and refused to even talk about these questions. That is not leadership – that is deception.

Chair Manha asked if there were any further questions but there were none.

Verification of the Posting of the Agenda:

It was verified by Pamela D. Moore, Deputy Clerk to the Board, that the Agenda for this meeting was posted on the 14th day of June, 2021, between the hours of 8:00 and 9:00 AM at all of the locations listed on the Agenda, in accordance with NRS 241.

Consideration and possible action re: Approval of Agenda as submitted or revised:

Member Robbie Lind made a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted. Member Karla Kent seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Appointments:

A- Consideration and possible action re: Approval of a request for certain members of the Coalition for Senior Citizens to be involved in the hiring process for the Senior Center Manager of the William N. Pennington Life Center and not to utilize Manpower but to allow current employees to continue working in their positions until the positions are filled by the county.

At the special meeting of the Coalition on June 11, 2021, Chairwoman Manha asked that the board request that Manpower not be utilized and that current employees be able to continue working in their current positions until the county positions are filled. Further, to request that certain members of the Coalition be included and participate in the selection process for the Senior Center Manager position.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Chair Manha asked if there was any discussion. Member Lind asked if the county approved taking out the Manpower Contract yesterday. Commissioner Health said it was withdrawn from the Agenda, so the county is okay with skipping Manpower altogether. Member Lind said great, then the employees will go ahead and apply for the positions and then, after July 1st, could you just verify what will happen there so we understand? Commissioner Health said once the position opens, they will be hired on and they will be put on a probationary period until the background check is completed.

Ken Brown said I do not understand this. Why do they go to Manpower? The county has an HR Department. If I went and applied for a job to the Road Department, which some of you know I am qualified for, I wouldn't go to Manpower to put in my application. I would come to the county. The application would go to the head of the Road Department and/or Human Resources here at the county and it would be processed that way. Now, suddenly here we have a no-bid Contract of \$8,700 or \$8,900. How much was it? This is just ridiculous for crying out loud. If you are going to do this, why not use the resources that are already available? Why are you going outside?

Chair Manha said, just to clarify, this is to not utilize Manpower but to allow current employees to continue working their positions, which they are eligible to apply for with the county and they will maintain their positions until such are filled.

Melanie Keener, Operations Assistant with the senior center, said the question I have is because Mr. Heath said that we would be hired on. Was that correct? Commissioner Health said if you apply and you get hired on, you will have to go through the background check but you will still be hired on even if that is not completed. Ms. Keener said I just wanted to clarify that. Today we were told that we would have a leg up in the application process. Commissioner Health said that is right because of the qualifications you have where you are the only one qualified to do the job, so that is your leg up for that. Some of the jobs are already posted on the county's website and they are open right now for people to apply. Ms. Keener said I just wanted to clarify because your statement was that we would be hired on and I want everyone to know that that is incorrect. We have to apply for our jobs. Commissioner Health said you have to apply for your job because that is the law. You still have to apply. Ms. Keener said I understand that. Commissioner Heath said it goes off of qualifications. Ms. Keener said let me finish, please. Your statement was that we would be hired on. Commissioner Health said if you are hired on. Ms. Keener said I am glad that you clarified that because the information you provided a moment ago was incorrect, so thank you. Commissioner Health said you are welcome.

Chair Manha asked if there were any other public comments.

Buster Pierce said I just wanted to say, with regard to doing background checks, we are still subject to one year of probation at-will employment for the record. That is what they told us today, not a reduced time or anything. Commissioner Health said that is right - whatever they

said but the background checks still have to be done.

Carl Erquiaga said this is where I think this whole thing has been in the dark. You are saying one thing. They were told something else today. They need to know exactly what happens.

Commissioner Heath said, Carl, they just have to apply for the job. Mr. Erquiaga said in open competition with anyone else that wants to apply for the job. Commissioner Heath said right but if they have the qualifications for getting hired on. Mr. Erquiaga said would you tell me what law that is? Commissioner Heath said I can't tell you exactly what law but you were a County Commissioner and you know. Mr. Erquiaga said is it state law, federal law, or a county law? Commissioner Heath said I am not sure exactly what it is but I think it is a federal law.

Whenever you apply for a government position, you have to put it out there, just like he was talking about with the Contract. You have to put it out and then you hire the one that is the most qualified. Mr. Erquiaga said a simple explanation of that last Thursday would have been very helpful because these people have been confused. Commissioner Heath said because you caused most of it. Mr. Erquiaga said I am sorry, are you saying I shouldn't exercise my First Amendment rights? Commissioner Heath said I am not saying that. Mr. Erquiaga said it sounded that way to me.

Chair Manha said are there any other public comments?

Phyllis Dowd said, with regard to the approval to request certain members of the Coalition to be involved in hiring the Senior Center Manager, are you going to speak to that separately because, so far, we have just been discussing Manpower and the hiring process. Chair Manha said, at the last board meeting, we, as the board, felt that we need to represent in the hiring of a Manager position if we approve removing the Director from the Bylaws. We would then probably table that to figure out, at the next special meeting, which is next week, to figure out who, how many, and what that process will look like. Today, we will not discuss the exact specifics but we do want to make sure we have a voice in the hiring process. Ms. Dowd said I am happy to hear that. I was just confused as to how the Agenda was set.

Member Carol Seitzinger made a motion to request that Churchill County not utilize Manpower and to request that current employees continue serving in their existing positions until the positions are filled and to request that certain members of the Coalition for Senior Citizens be included in the selection process for the Senior Center Manager. Member Karla Kent seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B- Consideration and possible action re: Approval of Amended Bylaws, which removes the position of Director and makes related changes based upon the Restructuring Plan of Churchill County for the provision of services to seniors.

In light of Churchill County's presentation of a Restructuring Plan for the services being offered to seniors in the community, if approved, the Bylaws would need to be amended. The Amended Bylaws are presented for the board's consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Jamie Hyde said I would like to see that we remain under the Open Meeting Law for our board meetings. I know that is not required by NRS because we are not a county board but are just an advisory board to the county but I would like to see the Bylaws changed so that it is still an open meeting.

Chair Manha said I would propose that we remove the position of the Director effective immediately since the county has provided an Interim Manager and for the Director to be paid out until the end of the month.

Chair Manha asked if there was any comment on that.

Lisa Erquiaga said you need to have a special board meeting to fire me. You had to hire me in an open meeting. Chair Manha said this is not firing you but to eliminate the position, but it has nothing to do with Lisa. Ms. Erquiaga said it is the same thing. The same thing. Chair Manha said no, it does not. This is eliminating the position in our Bylaws. Ms. Erquiaga said you are eliminating me. Chair Manha said no. Ms. Erquiaga said you just said that. Chair Manha said no, I did not. I said the position of Director. Ms. Erquiaga said you said immediately until the end of the month. Chair Manha said that is because the county has provided an Interim Manager. Ms. Erquiaga said yes and we are there together. Chair Manha said yes and that position would be paid until the end of the month. Ms. Erquiaga said you cannot get rid of me unless you do it in an open meeting. Chair Manha said I am not getting rid of you and am not suggesting that and this is not that. This is to eliminate the Director position and we do have the authority as the board to eliminate that position at any time. Ms. Erquiaga said okay, we will check on that.

Councilwoman Kent said I would also like to maybe take into consideration that we keep the number of board members at seven instead of reducing it down to five.

Member Lind said what will the board members be doing going forward because the county will be doing a lot of things. What will the board be doing? Do we need seven members because the financials and things that we go through in our meeting are now going to be handled by the county, so I am just a little uncertain about what goes forward. Chair Manha said that is a good question. I think we either have to choose five or seven members going forward. While our role is a little unclear at this time, we will still have oversight of the activities at the center etc. We will be able to discuss that and look at outside grant funding.

Chair Manha asked if there was any other discussion. Councilwoman Kent said I was just going to mention the Open Meeting Law. There will be certain things that we address going forward that will require an open meeting but then there are certain things that we handle that do not require an open meeting. By having it in our Bylaws, then we are going to have to abide by the Opening Meeting Law at all times, rather than just when the situation requires it. It is fine either way.

Chair Manha asked if there were any other comments. Mr. Erquiaga said, if it pleases the board,

I would like to make public comment. I, on the other hand, did look at the law for the Open Meeting Law, NRS 241.010 Legislative Declaration and Intent. In enacting this chapter, this Legislature finds and declares that all public bodies exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of the law that their action be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly. It then goes on to define a public body. NRS 241.015(4): "Except as otherwise provided in NRS 241.016, "public body" means: (a) Any administrative, advisory, executive or legislative body of the State or local government consisting of at least two persons which expends or disburses or is supported in whole or in part by tax revenue or which advises or makes recommendations to any entity which expends or disburses or is supported in whole or in part by tax revenue, including, but not limited to, any board, commission, subcommittee or other subsidiary thereof..." You do not get to pick and choose when you abide by the Open Meeting Law. That is why it is the Open Meeting Law. If you are not hiding anything, why wouldn't you want to abide by the Open Meeting Law?

Chair Manha asked if there was any other public comment. Phyllys Dowd said, so you know my background, I am a member of Soroptimists in Fallon and we go by our Bylaws, so I do have some comments that are probably outside of what you were thinking. In Section 1.03 on your Mission Statement, it refers to providing services but how are you going to provide services if the life center is run by the county? I think you probably need to redo the Mission Statement so that it is more applicable to what you are going to be doing going forward. Section 7.02 is titled as Operating a Senior Center but you will no longer be operating a senior center, so that should be changed. I highly recommend the changes in Section 7.03 on employees. By including language but recognize that all current and future staff of the William N. Pennington Life Center are employees of Churchill County really locks you in to whatever happens in the future. You have a paragraph in there saying you can hire employees but I think you should remove the language where it refers to any future employees will be hired by the county. If you hire somebody to come in 2 hours a week to do something on your behalf, the county is not going to want to have that position if it is solely for the Coalition themselves and not a county operation. That is just my recommendation. Chair Manha said thank you, that was helpful. Are there any further comments from the board or other public comment? There were none.

Member Karla Kent made a motion to approve the Amended Bylaws removing the Director position effective immediately based upon the Restructuring Plan of Churchill County for the provision of services to seniors, keeping the Coalition for Senior Citizens Board of Directors at seven (7) members, and keeping the Open Meeting Law in the Bylaws. Member Justin Heath seconded the motion, which carried by majority vote, with Member Lind and Member Richards opposed.

Public Comment:

Chair Manha asked if there was any public comment. Lola Boretz said I am a senior and have been here for five years. I just wanted to say that I could not believe the newspaper when I walked out of the hospital today. When I saw the headline, I was stunned. I can't, for the life of me, fathom how any of you can treat people the way you have. I feel it is disgusting. I am so upset. I just can't believe it. The people there have been wonderful. The programs have been

great. I have never been to a senior center more caring or more well-run or more involved in helping people to levels that I don't even think you guys would understand or even have a grasp upon because what you have done is just totally inhumane.

Chair Manha asked if there were any further public comments. Melanie Keener said I just want to say that I am surprised that out of all of you, other than Robbie Lind and Carol Seitzinger, I have not seen you at the senior center unless you are there to sign checks. Karla, I did see you at some point come to eat with Al. That is wonderful but not consistent. Since you have been on this board, Commissioner Heath, I have never seen you there. Never. Maybe you did a field trip the other day when Commissioner Koenig did but I have never seen you. You are on a board that is supposed to know what is happening, right? You are supposed to know what is happening with your facility. You are making decisions based on this facility, making decisions based off of the seniors of this community who are probably some of the majority of the voters, yet, I would see that as an uneducated decision because you haven't been there. You haven't looked at the programs, you haven't interacted with the staff, you haven't talked to the seniors, you haven't listened to how long they have been in the hospital or what their procedure was or that they just lost their spouse. You know none of that, yet you make decisions for all of us employees and for all of the seniors in this community and you have zero education on what you are doing. Shame on you! I am very disappointed, extremely, and you should all be disappointed in yourselves, aside from Carol and Robbie.

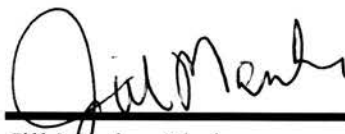
Chair Manha asked if there was any other public comment. Buster Pierce said I want to expand a little bit on what Melanie just said. I know you guys, when you go to get on a board, you decide I should get involved in the community and sit on a board, which is fine. We applaud you for that but you are just sitting on the board. The key words here are "getting involved". Do you know I have people that have worked for me for five, six, or eight years. I have been here ten years. On January 4, 2021, that was my tenth anniversary here. I have put my whole life into this place. Did I receive a card from any of you? Did anybody come by and say, "Good job"? I wasn't expecting a gold watch but a thank you and a cheap Timex would have done.

Chair Manha asked if there were any other public comments but there were none. She said I would like to make note that the board has received two letters, one from Sandella R. Reed and one from David Levers regarding Meals on Wheels. I want to request that these letters be put on the next Agenda.

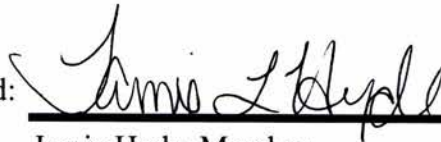
Adjournment:

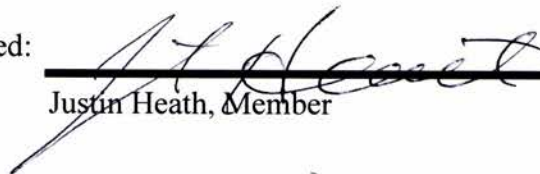
The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Approved: _____


Jill Manha, Chair

Approved: 
Karla Kent, Member

Approved: 
Jamie Hyde, Member

Approved: 
Justin Heath, Member

Approved: 
Julie Richards, Member

Approved: 
Roberta Lind, Member

Approved: 
Carol Seitzinger, Member

ATTEST:
Linda Rothery, Clerk/Treasurer


Pamela D. Moore, Deputy Clerk to the Board