

The Honorable Board of Lander County Commissioners met in special session in the Commission Chambers of the Lander County Courthouse in Battle Mountain, Nevada, on July 20, 2009 at 7:00 P.M.

**PRESENT: CHUCK CHAPIN, COMMISSIONER
BRYAN SPARKS, COMMISSIONER
STEVEN STIENMETZ, COMMISSIONER
CHRIS SCHMIDT, COMMISSIONER
RAY H. WILLIAMS, JR., COMMISSIONER
GENE P. ETCHEVERRY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JOY SWEENEY, HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR
ROGENE HILL, FINANCE DIRECTOR
DONNA J. BOHALL, DEPUTY CLERK**

ABSENT: WILLIAM E. SCHAEFFER, DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Chairman Chuck Chapin called the meeting to order.

Let the record reflect the presence of a quorum of five Commissioners.

Donna Bohall led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA NOTICE

The Notice of Posting was reviewed and found to be in order. Commissioner Stienmetz moved to approve the Agenda Notice, as posted. Seconded by Commissioner Schmidt, the motion was voted and carried unanimously. **Approved.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one present for public comment.

WORKSHOP

- 1) **Workshop With Recommendation For Commission Action Regarding Job Description For Lander County Public Works Director Position & Organization Of Public Works Department:** Let the record reflect the presence of the following individuals for this workshop: Steve Brigman, Shaw Engineering; Dora Wren, Shaw Engineering; Battle Mountain resident Bart Negro; Karen Morgan, Assistant to Public Works; Austin residents Don Kip & Dee Helming; Battle Mountain resident Larry Rogers; Battle Mountain resident Don Prince; and Battle Mountain resident Rob Wohle. Executive Director Gene Etcheverry provided the following update to the Board:

"We've met with different folks, Commissioners included, on how to proceed with administration of the public works department, organization within that department, and organization of the department as it relates to County administration. I received a lot of calls from folks in the community. It's very split between having a person in a position to oversee the public works department versus having lead men elevated to foremen. We had discussions on the difficulties it would create with the bargaining unit by elevating or opening up foreman-type positions.

We're here for the workshop so that you, the Commission, can take the input and we as staff can take the input to come up with some credible alternatives to make a decision on Thursday."

Mr. Brigman presented the following suggestion for the Board's consideration:

"I think the Public Works Director has been spread pretty thin. I think you need to lighten his load and spread it out a little. I think you should fill the public works director; I think it's not uncommon to have someone in charge of water/sewer and road/bridge. I think some leadership needs to be in that department, but not at such a high level that he's competing with the Executive Director. I would look to fill the position with a young engineer, somebody that can handle the regulatory side of things. You can elevate some lead men into mid-level supervisory roles and let them handle the road/bridge and water/sewer parts. The person that fills that public works director position has got to be able to delegate and he's got to have some strong mid-level supervisory people that can get things done."

The Board reviewed and discussed the following documentation, as presented by Mr. Etcheverry: **a)** Lander County's current organizational chart; **b)** Lander County organizational chart - draft 1; and, **c)** Lander County organizational chart - draft 2. Commissioner Chapin made the following comment for the record:

"We could have a public works director, bring that down to a level below Gene, and let Gene take care of the administration. I still think we have to go one step farther. We have to get our lead men at Road & Bridge and Public Works elevated up. I think they have to be a more accountable."

There was general discussion regarding the various costs associated with reorganization of the public works department. Mr. Helming made the following comment for the record:

"One of the biggest issues I've seen in all the Public Works Directors is trying to keep their finger over a huge county that spans 150 miles top to bottom, four communities, several outlying communities and all the issues that go with it. Any Public Works Director you put in place that doesn't have some sort of an infrastructure with a little bit more under him isn't going to work."

Ms. Morgan presented testimony in favor of hiring someone for the public works director position who has ties to the community and a vested interest in Battle Mountain and Austin. There was general discussion regarding the current structure of the Road and Bridge Department as it relates to the Public Works Department. Commissioner Chapin presented a brief history of how and why the public works department was first created. Commissioner Williams addressed the following concern:

"I was disappointed when I went to the sewer pond to talk to the guys and then talked to the guys in the water department that we don't have a line of progression for these people. There's no requirement in the manuals for anybody to be certified. They hired SPB in 2004. The total amount budgeted for that is around \$35,000.00. He's our expert on sewer/water, lives in Carson and works for a dozen different agencies plus the EPA. We need that expertise right here in the county. This to me is a real weakness in this whole process. I think road & bridge is different than sewer/water and parks."

There was general discussion regarding the possibility of compensating employees for obtaining/maintaining certifications. Commissioner Williams presented testimony in favor of having two supervisors for the road/bridge department, one in Austin and one in Battle Mountain; and made the following comment for the record:

"I look at just Battle Mountain here locally. I think you really need a Public Works Supervisor, somebody who's over the whole town - the sewer, the water, can coordinate with the streets and do all of the parks stuff."

Ms. Wren made the following comment for the record:

"It might not be a bad idea to look at every single job in all those departments. Start at the bottom and write new job descriptions. Be very specific in what their duties are. I think it'll help your lead men know what so and so is supposed to be doing. Maybe some check lists so they get things done in the appropriate time/manner. This might help solve some of the chaos in some of your departments."

There was general discussion regarding the job descriptions currently in place in the public works department and the need to change the job description for the public works director position should the Executive Director take on some of these administrative duties. Commissioner Chapin asked if Mr. Helming would be willing to leave the union to assume a supervisory position in the Road and Bridge Department. Mr. Helming responded, as follows:

"It would depend on how you write the job description. Who wants to step out into an at-will position and put his head on the chopping block for a system that right now doesn't work that well. It wouldn't be a bad career move if the money was good. But like the Public Works, he's an at-will who works at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners. If you decide you don't want the guy he's gone."

Commissioner Sparks requested clarification concerning the following issue:

"If we offered the existing people to step-up into supervisory roles and none of them wanted it, could we reorganize and get rid of three union people to hire the supervisors? We obviously don't need an extra body where it's not needed."

Human Resource Director Joy Sweeney noted that this would have to be negotiated with the union. Commissioner Stienmetz stated his support for the draft 2 organizational chart. Commissioner Williams concurred with Commissioner Stienmetz, with the following exception:

"The only change would be that road & bridge would come out somewhere different than under the Public Works Director. I still look at this Public Works Director as the key man here in Battle Mountain. He can take care of the whole sewer/water, parks, buildings. I think that's really important to have that here. But, I don't think he needs to be over the road & bridge. I think the road & bridge should be separate and come directly under the Executive Director. I feel people in road & bridge have to be available and qualified to make decisions about what they need and what they're doing."

Mr. Rogers explained that the Public Works Director should assume more of a planner/manager/organizer type role in the department. There was general discussion regarding the following issues: **a)** the need to create and implement a county road maintenance plan; **b)** costs associated with the County's grounds maintenance contracts; and, **c)** the current status of the County's computerized pavement maintenance program. Mr. Etcheverry presented testimony regarding the current condition of the County's parks/recreation facilities and the need to operate these facilities more effectively. Commissioner Stienmetz presented the following suggestion for the Board's consideration:

"I like draft 2 with the Public Works Superintendent. But, when you come down underneath that we need to further divide it where you have Austin Road & Bridge, Battle Mountain Road & Bridge, and put parks/recreation with sewer & water."

Commissioners Chapin, Sparks, and Schmidt concurred with Commissioner Stienmetz's suggestion. Commissioner Williams presented testimony in favor of removing the Road and Bridge Department out from under oversight of the Public Works Superintendent and letting them function as a department parallel to the Public Works Department. Mr. Helming addressed his frustrations with having to obtain a purchase order every time he wants to purchase something for the Austin Road and Bridge Department. There was general discussion regarding the County's current purchasing policy as dictated by the state. Commissioner Williams made the following comment for the record:

"I still think the Public Works Director should be more associated with the sewer & water, the parks and infrastructure right here in Battle Mountain. That's where you really need the focus. The road & bridge can run itself with the right supervisors outside the public works umbrella."

Mr. Etcheverry updated the Board regarding the public works department structure in both Elko and Humboldt counties. Commissioners Sparks, Stienmetz and Chapin, respectively, stated their support for a public works director/supervisor position. Let the record reflect that this matter was discussion only. **No Action - Discussion Only.**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board at this time, Commissioner Sparks moved to adjourn the meeting of July 20, 2009. Seconded by Commissioner Stienmetz, the motion was voted and carried unanimously. Meeting Adjourned.

**CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF LANDER
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND THE
LANDER COUNTY LIQUOR BOARD**

ATTEST: _____
LANDER COUNTY CLERK

Note: The Board of Lander County Commissioners serves as the Town Board for the unincorporated towns of Battle Mountain and Austin, Nevada.