



**COUNTY OF NEVADA  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER**

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Mali LaGoe  
Acting Community Development Agency Director

Chris de Nijs  
Agricultural Commissioner

**Agricultural Advisory Commission  
MINUTES, January 20, 2021, Meeting**

**Members Present:** Brad Fowler, Laura Barhydt, Sue Hoek, Seth Rosmarin, Robert Graham, Aleta Barrett, and Debbie Bierwagen

**Members absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Chris de Nijs, Agricultural Commissioner; and Jennifer Acree, Office Assistant

**Public Present:** Cindy Fake, UCCE Cooperative Extension; Chip Close, Nevada Irrigation District (NID), Rich Johansen, and Jeremiah Farrell

**1. Call to Order**

Commission Chair Fowler called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Commission Chair Fowler led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Commission Chair Fowler called for a motion to approve the agenda. Commission Member Barrett motioned. Commission Member Barhydt seconded the motion. **None abstained. None opposed. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**4. Approval of Minutes of the November 18, 2020, Meeting**

Commission Chair Fowler called for a motion to approve the November 18, 2020, Meeting Minutes. Commission Member Barhydt motioned to approve the meeting minutes as written. Commission Member Barrett seconded the motion. **None abstained. None opposed. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**5. Public Comment**

Jeremiah Farrell introduced himself to the Commission and guests as a long time Nevada County resident and a local beekeeper. Some of his beehives were ran over and destroyed in June of 2019 and again in July of 2020. The District Attorney declined to prosecute the crime. Commission Chair Fowler mentioned there has been discussion about developing a rural crimes task force. He will follow-up with Jeremiah about this.

**6. Agency Comment**

**A.) Nevada Irrigation District (NID)**

Chip Close reported that as of January 13, 2021, Bowman Lake precipitation is at 43 percent of average and storage is at 164,863-acre feet, 87 percent of average, and 61 percent of capacity. NID is prepping for dry year operations and is currently at Stage 3 Drought. There is potential for a State mandated drought.

Dry year actions may include changes to the irrigation season and rate increases. Chip included an explanation of their rate schedule and charges. Water usage has increased slightly because more people are home now due to COVID-19.

Commission Member Barrett asked if there is a contingency plan or a priority plan considered for food producers. Chip answered that in addition to the Drought Contingency Plan Committee, there is a Hardship Committee. The hardship is reviewed by the committee, the Board of Directors, and some community members. Commission Member Rosmarin asked if there is a formula of how much storage is derived from an inch of rain. Chip answered not at his time because rain soaks into the ground rather than collects in the reservoir.

Commission Member Hoek asked when the Drought Contingency Plan Committee will begin meeting. Chip plans to schedule a meeting the first part of February.

NID Board of Director Rich Johansen commented the challenge is to grow a higher value crop to somewhat offset the water cost increase. Placer and Nevada Counties Farm Advisor Cindy Fake mentioned that perennial crops are of concern. If there isn't enough rain in January many of the perennial crops die. Chip explained that currently it isn't feasible for NID to provide more water in these types of situations.

NID's 2021 Planning Projects include Water Management Plans, Strategic Planning, and Water Rate Discussions. These projects include public meetings and involvement.

**B.) Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRC)**

Sabrina Nicholson was unable to attend. Commission Vice Chair Barhydt reported the invasive weeds booklet is at the printer and will be available soon.

**C.) UCCE Farm Advisor**

Cindy Fake reported she shortened her educational sabbatical for the time being. Currently she is focusing primarily on mulching research. This is critical for reducing water use and stress on the plants as it relates to fluctuating temperatures and increased wind. Additional mulching workshops this spring will be scheduled and allow for six to eight people outdoors. Cash flow and insurance workshops are being scheduled for February.

**D.) Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS)**

No update.

**F.) Sierra Harvest**

Commission Member Barrett reported beginning farming classes start soon. The Eco Farm Conference is taking place January 20<sup>th</sup>, through January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021.

**7. New Business**

**A.) Election of 2021 Chair and Vice Chair (Action)**

Commission Chair Fowler called for a nomination of a 2021 Commission Chair. Commission Vice Chair Barhydt motioned to nominate Commission Chair Fowler as Chair. Commission Member Hoek seconded the motion. **None opposed/none abstained. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Commission Chair Fowler called for a nomination of a 2021 Vice Chair. Commission Member Bierwagen motioned to nominate Commission Vice Chair Barhydt as Vice Chair. Commission Member Hoek seconded the motion. **None opposed/none abstained. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**B.) Review of Commission Bylaws**

Chris added this item as a refresher/reminder to review the commission bylaws. Chris reported there are six to seven applicants to fill vacancies. Commission Member Hoek suggested the possibility of her position changing to ex-officio. Chris will include a draft revision to the bylaws for the March meeting.

### **8. Agricultural Commissioner's Report**

Chris reported he is waiting for the Association of Realtors to give feedback on the updated draft Right to Farm Act. He is working with Dan Macon and a small group of ranchers on the Ag Pass Program. The COVID-19 vaccine should be available to some of the community soon. Information can be found on the County's Public Health website or by calling 211. Chris will send more information about the vaccine. The Board of Supervisors approved a permanent ban on hemp during the January 12, 2021, meeting.

### **10. Member Announcements**

Commission Vice Chair Barhydt and Commission Member Hoek both provided some additional COVID-19 health and vaccine information resources within the County.

### **11. Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: *Jennifer Acree*  
Jennifer Acree, Office Assistant II

Approved on: March 17, 2021

Commission Chair, Brad Fowler

*Brad Fowler/j.a.*