

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2021  
NEVADA LEGISLATURE'S INTERIM FINANCE COMMITTEE'S  
SUBCOMMITTEE TO ADVISE ON THE EXPENDITURE OF  
FEDERAL COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDING

Chair Dondero Loop called the second meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Interim Finance Committee's Subcommittee to Advise on the Expenditure of Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding to order at 8:34 a.m. on Thursday, December 2, 2021, via videoconference. There was no physical location for the meeting pursuant to *Nevada Revised Statutes* 218A.820.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair  
Senator Chris Brooks  
Senator Nicole Cannizzaro  
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert  
Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton  
Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui  
Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno  
Assemblywoman Jill Tolles

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Sarah Coffman, Assembly Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Alex Haartz, Chief Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Brody Leiser, Chief Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Cathy Crocket, Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Karen Hoppe, Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Bryan Fernley, Legislative Counsel, Legal Division  
Eileen O'Grady, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division  
Tom Weber, Secretary, Fiscal Analysis Division

**EXHIBITS:**

Exhibit A: Agenda  
Exhibit B: Public Comment – Clark DuMont, Vegas PBS  
Exhibit C: Public Comment – Tiffany Tyler-Garner, Children's Advocacy Alliance  
Exhibit D: Public Comment – Lyberal Johnson  
Exhibit E: Minutes of the October 5, 2021, Meeting  
Exhibit F: Presentation on the Use of Coronavirus Relief Funds-Update on Expenditures  
Exhibit G: Overview of Sections of Chapter 353 of the *Nevada Revised Statutes* Relating to the Acceptance and Expenditure of Federal Funds Report on Public Health Programs  
Exhibit H: Nevada Housing Division  
Exhibit I: Nevada Housing Assistance Spreadsheet  
Exhibit J: Emergency Rental Assistance Program January 1 - October 31, 2021

Exhibit K: Emergency Rental Assistance Program April 1 - October 31, 2021  
Exhibit L: Division of Welfare and Supportive Services Nevada Child Care Landscape  
Exhibit M: Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations and American Spending Plan Summary for Child Care  
Exhibit N: Division of Public and Behavioral Health Overview of COVID-19 Funding  
Exhibit O: Nevada's Priorities for American Rescue Plan Act Mapping  
Exhibit P: Public Comment – Jane Amone, The Nature Conservancy  
Exhibit Q: Public Comment – Kent Ervin, Nevada Faculty Alliance  
Exhibit R: Public Comment – Douglas Unger, UNLV President, Nevada Faculty Alliance  
Exhibit S: Public Comment – Edward Goodrich  
Exhibit T: Public Comment – Terri Laird, Executive Director, RPEN

## **A. ROLL CALL.**

Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), called the roll; all members were present.

## **B. PUBLIC COMMENT.**

Mary Mazur, President and General Manager, Vegas PBS, said that public television could bring equity and economic benefit to Nevada. She reported that Vegas PBS had submitted two proposals for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investment. The first request was a joint request of \$3.5 million between Vegas PBS and Reno PBS to transmit broadband over public television's airways. Ms. Mazur noted the widened digital gap in underserved rural areas and low-income urban communities. She said new next generation (Next-Gen) technology would provide the capacity for public television to transmit broadband or Internet protocol signals over the air. Ms. Mazur added that public television's broadband could reach every household within antenna range without costly infrastructure cables or cellular tower investments.

Ms. Mazur said the emerging technology would create numerous applications for local, state, and community-based organizations. She reported that Vegas PBS was ready to serve and respond to education, emergency response and public safety needs. Ms. Mazur said that an investment now would put statewide public television infrastructure in place and pilot new technology applications that would emerge over the next decade.

Continuing, Ms. Mazur said the second proposal was a request for continued state support of Outdoor Nevada programming. She said that state funding provided for national viewing of key travel markets. Ms. Mazur added that evidence supported increased travel and visitation to featured locations. She concluded that continued projections to disadvantaged communities could have a significant impact on tourism revenue.

Tom Warden, Senior Vice President, Howard Hughes Corporation, Vegas PBS Board Member, commented on proposals submitted by Vegas PBS for potential ARPA investment. He discussed the joint request between Vegas PBS and PBS Reno for a one-time \$3.5 million investment in hardware infrastructure for statewide broadband and broadcast transmission. Mr. Warden said that Next-Gen technology would make broadband available to every household and provide for educational emergency response and public safety applications.

Mr. Warden said that Vegas PBS was requesting a reinstatement of funding that was cut during the 2021 Legislative Session. He reported an increase in tourism to rural and underutilized urban areas following featured programming. Mr. Warden said that Outdoor Nevada programming addressed the economic, community and quality of life priorities listed in the Every Nevadan Recovery Framework.

Clark DuMont, President of the Board of Directors, Vegas PBS, provided written testimony for the record (Exhibit B). He said with state funding, the Outdoor Nevada programming would be distributed on 244 public television stations aired in the top ten travel markets. Mr. DuMont noted that the request for \$900,000 in ARPA funds would provide opportunities to feature and bring awareness to Nevada's hardest hit areas.

Mr. Dumont said that previous state investments had built the foundation to update NextGen equipment's existing powers in station infrastructure. He explained that the goal was for all state and community-based stations to tap into this resource for new and innovative public safety and telemedicine applications and to restore backup systems when other broadband infrastructure failed.

Marie Foster, resident of Douglas County, Nevada, voiced her concern about mask mandates in Douglas County schools.

Casey Rodgers, private citizen, opined that Nevadan's freedoms were not being protected.

Tiffany Tyler-Garner, PhD, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance, provided written testimony for the record (Exhibit C). She emphasized the need to invest in child care. She encouraged consideration of investments in infant and early childhood mental health, home visits and infant and toddler child care.

Lyberal Johnson, private citizen, provided written testimony for the record (Exhibit D). She noted that she was a single parent with an income 30% above the federal poverty level and 85% below the state's median income. She noted that after being on a two-year wait list for child care assistance, she was denied. Ms. Johnson said that she qualified for a 50% subsidy but was informed that the state did not supplement under 80% of child care. She asked the subcommittee to consider an increase in child care subsidies for working parents.

Anna Marie Binder, resident of Clark County, discussed a report issued by the Office for Civil Rights, dated November 1, 2021, which included several recommendations to address the need for behavioral and mental health and expand higher education offerings to support the degrees that would align state licensing. She asked for consideration of allocating funds to programs for Nevada's children.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 2021, MEETING. (Exhibit E)**

SENATOR BROOKS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 2021, MEETING.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARLTON SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**D. UPDATE ON THE EXPENDITURE OF NEVADA'S ALLOCATION FROM THE FEDERAL CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND (CRF).**

Susan Brown, Director, Governor's Finance Office (GFO), provided a presentation on the use of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRFs) and an update on the expenditures to date (Exhibit F). She said the amount of finalized approved allocations totaled \$831,078,199, with just under \$5 million remaining in CRFs. Ms. Brown reported that the figures represented all payments made from March 2020 through September 2021. She noted the highlighted items were projects that carried over into FY 2022 with expenses incurred through December 31, 2021. Ms. Brown said the dollar amounts represented year-to-date actual amounts and projected expenses through December 2021.

Leslie Mohlenkamp, Coronavirus Federal Aid Coordinator, GFO, noted that the expenditures were categorized to illustrate where funds were allocated. She said that some of the first CRF payments were made to local governments with populations of 500,000 or less. Ms. Mohlenkamp added that a total of \$148.5 million was provided to deliver financial resources and assist in response and recuperation efforts to nearly all of Nevada's counties. She explained that Lander County did not accept its allocation and Esmeralda County only requested a portion of funds, resulting in \$1.1 million returned by those counties for reallocation.

Ms. Mohlenkamp said the state also provided agencies and the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) a series of allocations to assist with mitigation and response costs. She explained that reimbursements were for specific eligible expenses including personal protective equipment (PPE) and sanitation supplies; telework and social distancing equipment; IT systems; COVID-19 administrative leave; salaries for employees who were on sick leave, quarantining, or contending with child care or school closures; employees whose duties shifted to respond to the public health emergency; and public health and

public safety salaries. Ms. Mohlenkamp reported that these allocations totaled \$336 million combined for FY 2020, FY 2021 and FY 2022.

Ms. Mohlenkamp said the state provided allocations from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund to facilitate distance learning and ensure the safe reopening of schools. She advised that the funds augmented other CARES Act allocations that were distributed for K-12 education.

Ms. Mohlenkamp said that CRFs provided for K-12 education were used to develop online learning programs; implement plans for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing services for educators; supply PPE to school districts; reimburse costs for computers, hot spots, and ventilation system upgrades; and to augment any funding gaps to ensure the safe reopening of schools. She stated that the total allocation of CRFs for K-12 education was \$65 million.

Ms. Mohlenkamp discussed eligible uses of CRFs for housing assistance which included funding of rental assistance programs, support for housing assistance, and funding for the Homeowner Connect portal, which offered homeowners access to federal and state mortgage assistance. She said the state provided additional homeless housing in Washoe County to enable social distancing measures and funded the Eviction Mediation Program to resolve tenant-landlord issues that could result in eviction. She stated that the amount allocated toward housing programs totaled over \$31 million.

Ms. Mohlenkamp noted that public health and emergency response was heavily supported by CRFs and other federal funding through expanded Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allowances and epidemiology and laboratory capacity (ELC) funds. The CRFs supported medical, public health and emergency response efforts including PPE surge capacity, COVID-19 testing supplies, contact tracing and investigation, health laboratory resources, funding to health districts, a medical intelligence platform used by hospitals to share COVID-19 data, vaccination resources and emergency medical services. Additionally, she noted that the funds supported several mental health mitigation efforts, which included youth suicide prevention, mobile outreach safety teams (MOST) and a mobile crisis response team. Ms. Mohlenkamp stated that the amount allocated to public health and emergency response totaled over \$132 million.

Ms. Mohlenkamp discussed CRF programs that supported efforts to revive the workforce and the economy. She said the programs included the Commercial Rental Assistance Grant program to assist businesses and the Pandemic Emergency Technical Support program, which reimbursed the cost of business interruption due to required closures. Ms. Mohlenkamp reported that the Governor's Office of Economic Development initiated feasibility studies and used CRF allocations to provide immediate economic response and workforce development plans and remarketed Nevada to encourage safe activities to travelers and to generate tourism dollars. She stated that the workforce and economic development programs received a total of \$68 million in CRF allocations.

Ms. Mohlenkamp said that CRF allocations for food assistance facilitated compliance with public health measures and were key in assisting Nevadans affected by the economic downturn. She noted that the Department of Agriculture provided CRF allocations to community organizations and public entities working to reduce food insecurity. Ms. Mohlenkamp added that the funds supported a grant program to offset reductions in the agriculture and food industries caused by shutdowns.

Ms. Mohlenkamp reported that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs received allocations to assist with grocery delivery for students and WIC program participants. Additionally, she noted that funding was provided for the Delivery with Dignity Program, which provided food delivery to homes to ensure social distancing during the peak of the pandemic. Ms. Mohlenkamp stated that the total CRF allocation for food assistance was \$9.2 million.

Ms. Mohlenkamp discussed miscellaneous funding used to provide equipment to support COVID-19 research at NSHE institutions; facilitate social distancing requirements at election sites; assist agencies with unanticipated expenses due to COVID-19; and provide a wireless network project for the City of Las Vegas. Additionally, she reported that CRF allocations provided additional resources for the unemployment call center and inmate phone calls to offset the elimination of in-person visits. The funds also covered expenses incurred by the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) and covered the cost for the 31<sup>st</sup> Special Session (2020). Ms. Mohlenkamp stated that the CRF allocation for miscellaneous funding totaled \$40.5 million.

Ms. Mohlenkamp reported that remaining CRFs totaled \$4.9 million. She said the GFO had reviewed proposals submitted for incurred eligible expenses for allocation from the balance of funds. Ms. Mohlenkamp advised that the funds must be expended by the end of calendar year 2021. She said the proposals focused on telehealth, COVID-19 related overtime, vaccination/testing, and bolstering the Unemployment Insurance trust fund. She reported that the GFO would oversee programs to guarantee that projects were on target. Ms. Mohlenkamp said the GFO was dedicated to ensuring that all CRFs would be expended.

Assemblywoman Jauregui opined that Nevada was not meeting the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) objectives for the timely distribution of rental assistance dollars. She asked for an update on the Emergency Rental Assistance program.

Senator Brooks asked if the remaining \$4.9 million fund requests would come to the IFC as 15-day work programs to expedite processing.

Ms. Brown confirmed that if a work program was required, it would go before the IFC as a 15-day work program.

Senator Brooks asked if the \$65 million allotted for K-12 education was in addition to ESSER and GEER funding. Ms. Mohlenkamp confirmed that the CRFs augmented the ESSER and GEER funds.

## **E. REPORT ON PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

Melissa Peek-Bullock, State Epidemiologist, Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), provided an overview of the COVID-19 status in Nevada (Exhibit G). She reported there was an 82% reduction in the 14-day average daily new cases compared to November 30, 2020. Ms. Peek-Bullock reported that currently, 671 individuals in Nevada were hospitalized due to COVID-19, which was a 58% reduction from November 30, 2020. Continuing, she noted a 52% reduction in patients in intensive care units and a 49% reduction in patients on ventilators. Ms. Peek-Bullock said there was a 75% reduction in the 14-day average of daily deaths from COVID-19 compared to November 2020.

Ms. Peek-Bullock noted a trend toward a sustainable baseline. She said as of November 30, 2021, almost 58% of Nevada adults and 62% of Nevada children over the age of five had initiated vaccination. Ms. Peek-Bullock discussed potential increases in COVID-19 cases. She said quantitative projections for the holiday season and the upcoming year were difficult to predict due to changing factors in disease mitigation and impacts on transmission, which included previous school closures, limits on gathering sizes, capacity restrictions, community perception and behavior, vaccinations, natural immunity, and emerging variants of concern.

Ms. Peek-Bullock discussed COVID-19 variants and Omicron. She said according to data produced by the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory the predominate variant of concern in Nevada was the Delta variant.

Ms. Peek-Bullock said the full impact of the Omicron variant was uncertain at this time. She reported that the Omicron variant infected fully vaccinated persons and those who had recovered from other variants. Ms. Peek-Bullock noted that data was not available on the full spectrum of symptoms and severity; however, she said symptoms appeared to be mild overall. Ms. Peek-Bullock reported that work was ongoing in the United States to discover the extent of the spread of the variant, the impact of transmissibility and severity, vaccines, and therapeutics.

Ms. Peek-Bullock discussed increased Omicron surveillance activities. She reported that a Presidential proclamation was issued which suspended air travel for passengers entering the United States from South African countries; required all passengers entering the United States to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within one day of departure; required all passengers arriving in the United States to retest upon entry and self-quarantine for seven days; required all travelers to take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test within three to five days post-arrival; and required travelers to sign an attestation of compliance if they tested positive for COVID-19 or were symptomatic. She

added that all COVID-19 positive cases with any history of international travel or exposure would have specimens sent to the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory for full sequencing.

Ms. Peek-Bullock explained that epidemiology teams across the state continued to focus on outbreaks in special settings, prioritize cases among special populations, monitor for outbreaks, and provide mitigation measures to control any outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools, correctional facilities, health care settings, and child care settings.

Concluding, Ms. Peek-Bullock stated that tools were available to reduce the impact of COVID-19. She noted the importance of continued vaccination and booster promotion, masking, hand hygiene and therapeutic intervention.

Shannon Bennett, Program Manager, Nevada State Immunization Program, DPBH, DHHS, advised that all Nevadans five years and older were eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. She said that currently there were 371 enrolled providers that can administer COVID-19 vaccines. Ms. Bennett reported that as of November 30, 2021, data indicated that 62% of Nevadans aged five years and older had initiated vaccinations; 53% of Nevadans aged five and older had completed vaccinations; approximately 8% of 5- to 11-year-olds had initiated vaccinations; and 9% of the doses administered were boosters for immunocompromised people.

Ms. Bennett discussed how authorized funding was utilized to support the implementation of the Nevada Immunization Program. She said that \$8 million supported enhanced staffing and Nevada WebIZ; \$1.8 million supported a statewide vaccine confidence strategy using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Vaccinate with Confidence platform; \$2 million supported listening sessions and town hall meetings; \$400,000 was reserved to assist providers in purchasing more reliable storage equipment and \$1.3 million supported community health workers (CHWs) deployed across the state to coordinate and staff mobile pop-up clinics.

Ms. Bennett noted the largest portion of providers offering vaccines were in family medicine practice and there was also a growing number of pediatric providers who offered COVID-19 vaccines.

Heidi Parker, Executive Director, Immunize Nevada, highlighted the VAX Nevada Days program. She explained that the eight-week promotional effort was developed in collaboration with the Governor's Office and was created to incentivize Nevadans to get vaccinated. She commented that the VAX Nevada Days program rewarded vaccinated Nevadans with a chance to win a share of \$5 million in cash and prizes.

Ms. Parker stated that VAX Nevada Days officially began when the first prizes were announced on July 8, 2021, and concluded on August 26, 2021. She reported that in the eight-week period, 440,988 vaccines were administered. Ms. Parker commented that vaccination numbers rose in early July 2021 after the first winners were announced. She was confident that VAX Nevada Days played a significant role in encouraging individuals



who were undecided about the vaccine to become vaccinated, which increased the vaccination numbers.

Ms. Parker noted that the cash prizes ranged from \$1,000 to a \$1 million grand prize. She advised that vaccinated 12- to 17-year-old children qualified to win a 529 Education Savings Plan award of \$5,000 to \$50,000. Additionally, she said that fishing licenses and Nevada State Parks entrance permits were awarded. Ms. Parker added that any Nevadan who had received the vaccination between December 2020 and August 2021 was automatically entered.

Ms. Parker reported that 2,000 winners in total were randomly selected from all Nevadans who had initiated at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The winners included 19 students, 11 members of the military, and 25 health care and essential workers. She noted that the youngest winner was 12 years old and the oldest was 83 years old. She reiterated that 440,988 additional Nevadans were protected against COVID-19 during VAX Nevada Days.

Ms. Parker discussed the partnerships with International Gaming Technology to ensure fairness and equity in the blind drawing process and with Nevada WebIZ to validate vaccination status. She noted that vaccination data was provided by the Nevada Health Response Team and coordinated through the State of Nevada immunization program, Immunize Nevada. Ms. Parker thanked all the VAX Nevada Days partners, as well as Immunize Nevada staff and volunteers.

Tim Robb, State Pandemic Response Coordinator, Office of the Governor, discussed the Get Out the Vax (GOTVax) program, developed to inform individuals how they could protect themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that the program began in July 2021 because of significant increases in COVID-19 cases in the Clark County area. Mr. Robb explained that the program began by targeting 22 zip codes identified with low vaccination rates, high case rates, high death rates and social vulnerability criteria that were observed and analyzed to locate areas where people were not being informed or did not have easy access to clinics.

Mr. Robb reported there were 436 events supported by the GOTVax team ranging from large pop-up clinics to static sites. He said the GOTVax mission also supported additional after hour vaccination clinics at various locations. Mr. Robb highlighted zip codes in the Las Vegas Valley where he noted the programs had an incredible impact.

Mr. Robb mentioned some of the partners that were instrumental in the success of the program. He said the GOTVax program had transitioned to the Southern Nevada Health District. Mr. Robb reported that during the month of November 2021, targeted social media continued and 12,625 flyers were distributed to target communities.

Mr. Robb discussed the CDC Foundation partnership. He said that the CDC Foundation partnered with the Governor's Office to create the Nevada Health Response Team (NHRT). Mr. Robb stated the CDC Foundation had provided the resources and expertise

to accomplish the state's goals. He reported that the NHRT was comprised of a program director, a strategic communications office and support staff, and a private business sector coordinator. Mr. Robb added that the NHRT had partnered with the CDC Foundation to fund other Nevada state agency positions to assist in the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Assemblywoman Carlton referred to slide 10 of Exhibit G. She asked if travelers going "south of the border" for the holidays would be required to quarantine for seven days. Assemblywoman Carlton said it was important to advise Nevadans of the requirements.

Melissa Peek-Bullock, State Epidemiologist, DPBH, DHHS, said that any travelers entering the United States would be required to quarantine. She opined that the CDC had updated its website to communicate that information.

In response to Assemblywoman Carlton, Ms. Peek-Bullock confirmed that the recommendation to quarantine upon entering the United States pertained to all modes of travel.

Discussion ensued between Assemblywoman Carlton and Ms. Peek-Bullock regarding the CDC's protocol for travel. Assemblywoman Carlton reiterated the importance of disseminating the information to the public.

There was discussion between Senator Brooks and Mr. Robb regarding the CDC Foundation. Mr. Robb said the foundation was funded by grants and in partnership with the Governor's Office for resources and expertise. He noted that the grant would sunset on June 30, 2022, with an option to extend.

Discussion ensued regarding quarantine requirements for children traveling internationally with their families. Ms. Peek-Bullock said that children should quarantine at home and not attend school during the seven-day quarantine period. Mr. Robb stated that more information was forthcoming, and it would be reviewed and communicated. Chair Dondero Loop said it was important to have timely communication since families were already planning holiday vacations.

## **F. EXECUTIVE BRANCH AGENCY PRESENTATIONS REGARDING THE EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDING.**

### **1. Department of Business and Industry – Housing Division**

Steve Aichroth, Administrator, Nevada Housing Division (NHD), Department of Business and Industry, provided an overview of the Nevada Housing Division and services provided during the pandemic (Exhibit H). He said that the Rental Assistance Program was the primary source of aid provided during the pandemic.

Mr. Aichroth reviewed the NHD's primary duties prior to the pandemic. He said that the division provided home ownership opportunities; administered tax credit programs to

preserve multi-family rentals; provided oversight for state and federal housing grants and manufactured housing; provided weatherization programs; examined low-income housing data; and assisted families with housing concerns.

Mr. Aichroth discussed NHD's pandemic response prior to any federal assistance. He said that Clark County Social Services (CCSS) initiated a housing assistance program using \$30 million in CRFs and \$20 million in supplemental funding from the NHD. Mr. Aichroth stated that the NHD provided \$5 million in initial funding to the Reno Housing Authority, which was supplemented by the City of Reno and the City of Sparks. He added that the NHD provided \$5 million in initial funding to all 15 rural counties.

Mr. Aichroth said Nevada received CARES Act Housing Assistance Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funding. He reported that the first ERA funds (ERA 1) totaled \$208 million and supported the CCSS, Reno Housing Authority, Nevada Rural Housing Authority, and the Home Means Nevada Eviction Mediation Program. Mr. Aichroth noted that ERA 1 funds would expire September 30, 2022. He said the second bucket of funding (ERA 2) totaled \$75 million and 40% of that was approved for spending. Mr. Aichroth reported that the ERA 2 funds would expire on September 30, 2025.

Mr. Aichroth reviewed the Housing Assistance spreadsheet (Exhibit I), which provided information on CRFs allocated to housing assistance. He said that \$108 million in CRFs was provided for rental assistance prior to the establishment of federal funding. Mr. Aichroth noted there were challenges around the requirements for the ERA 1 funds. He said the ERA program commenced in May 2021.

Mr. Aichroth noted that the ERA program had provided \$114 million in assistance to 18,000 households. He said that table 2 (Exhibit I) showed the amount spent by each county as of October 31, 2021. Mr. Aichroth added over \$220 million was provided from both the CRF and ERA 1 funds as of October 31, 2021, noted on table 3 (Exhibit I).

Mr. Aichroth reviewed table 4 in Exhibit I that indicated the adjusted percentage of ERA 1 fund usage. He noted that this information would address the question previously asked by Assemblywoman Jauregui. Mr. Aichroth explained that although the state received \$208 million, the true value for expenditure was \$187 million, adjusted 10% for administration costs.

Mr. Aichroth reported that anything below a 65% expenditure rate on September 30, 2021, triggered a potential reallocation of funds. He added that if the jurisdiction had not spent 30% of the funds, a program improvement plan would have been required to avoid reallocation. Per Treasury guidance, any reallocation would first occur within the state. Mr. Aichroth commented that the state funding would take effect after local jurisdiction funding was exhausted.

Mr. Aichroth reviewed information provided by the Treasury that displayed expenditures by state (Exhibit J). He noted that row 17 indicated Nevada had an expenditure ratio of 61% for all funds. Among the states, Nevada ranked 12 for expenditure of ERA 1 dollars.

Mr. Aichroth noted that Nevada's ERA 1 dollars were projected to be spent by spring 2022. He said the ARPA passed in March 2021 provided for the ERA 2 funds. Mr. Aichroth advised that in accordance with the *Nevada Revised Statutes*, 40% of the ERA 2 funds, totaling \$30.5 million, were provided through the IFC process.

Continuing, Mr. Aichroth reviewed the expenditure ratio of the ERA 2 funds in Nevada (Exhibit K). He said that 6% of the 40% allocated funds had been spent. He added that Nevada ranked 19 in the country. Mr. Aichroth said the ERA 2 funds must be used by 2025. He commented that Nevada had created a structure providing for funding to any local jurisdiction that may have exhausted its funds.

Assemblywoman Jauregui asked about the process for reallocation of funds. She understood the funds could be reallocated outside of the state.

Mr. Aichroth confirmed that the funds could be allocated to another state if the funding could not be fully spent. He assured the Subcommittee that Nevada was not at risk for reallocation of funds to another state.

Assemblywoman Jauregui asked if there was probability of the state reallocating funds to Clark County. She was concerned that the 61% percentage distribution was below the goal of 65%.

Mr. Aichroth said the state would not be at risk of reallocation if distribution remained above 30%. He advised that in September 2021 the percentage would increase each month. He added that if the state remained above that increased percentage, it would not be subject to reallocation. Mr. Aichroth noted that nearly all the local jurisdiction funding had been expended in Clark County. He added that currently Clark County primarily operated with state funds.

Assemblywoman Jauregui asked how much ERA 2 funding would be available once it was approved for distribution. Mr. Aichroth replied that there was significant funding to continue the ERA program for quite some time.

Senator Brooks asked for an aggregate number of households that received assistance through the ERA programs.

Mr. Aichroth directed attention to table 3 (Exhibit I) and noted that 43,000 households had received ERA program assistance.

There was discussion between Senator Brooks and Mr. Aichroth regarding a breakdown of the types of households that received assistance.

In response to a question from Assemblywoman Jauregui, Mr. Aichroth said that Nevada would be eligible to receive dollars reallocated from other states. He commented that the state would need to make a request to the Treasury and then certain standards would have to be met.

There was discussion between Senator Brooks and Mr. Aichroth regarding the average occupancy of homes in the State of Nevada. Senator Brooks thought it was approximately 4.2 people per home; however, Mr. Aichroth indicated it might be lower but did not have the statistic available. Mr. Aichroth said that many households were comprised of single seniors and couples. He remarked that there were not as many large families. Mr. Aichroth said he would provide the information to the Subcommittee.

Assemblywoman Carlton said that many constituents who needed assistance were homeowners. To see the true impact, the totals would need to reflect the number of rental units and number of renters who received assistance.

Senator Brooks asked for the number of unemployed people who had received housing assistance, as well as the household types, including shared households. He said this information would help him understand how long the assistance would be needed and at what point it would no longer be required. He asked the NHD to provide the information when it became available.

Mr. Aichroth discussed Emergency Solutions Grants, (ESG-CV). He reported that the division receives about \$400,000 in ESGs annually from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. He said that in 2021, the division received \$7.8 million in ESG-CV and the state received \$40 million. Mr. Aichroth noted that \$32 million was provided directly to local jurisdictions and the division received approximately \$8 million for the homeless to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus and provide housing assistance. Mr. Aichroth said that 11 agencies throughout the state were funded through ESG-CV grant funds. He noted that the funds would expire September 30, 2022.

Mr. Aichroth reported that \$6.7 million in National Housing Trust Funds (NHTFs) would be provided solely to the state. He added that typically the division received \$3 million annually. Mr. Aichroth said that six projects were funded specifically to produce and preserve affordable housing for extremely vulnerable households. He noted that NHTFs were incorporated into the NHD's 9% tax break program, and the funds would expire in 2028.

Mr. Aichroth stated that the Home American Rescue Plan (Home-ARP) Program funds of \$37 million were provided statewide. He added that NHD had received an extra \$6.4 million in addition to the \$3 million the division received annually. Mr. Aichroth commented that the Home-ARP funds must be used to assist individuals that were homeless or at risk of homelessness by providing housing and support services. He stated that the NHD was developing a plan for distribution of the funds per Treasury guidance. Mr. Aichroth noted that the funds would expire in 2030.

Mr. Aichroth reviewed the Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF), which provided a total of \$121 million in homeowner assistance. He reported that the fund would be administered by the Nevada Affordable Housing Assistance Corporation (NAHAC). Mr. Aichroth said that a percentage of the fund was advanced to states to hire staff and develop a

pilot program. He noted that the pilot program was launched by NAHAC on November 15, 2021. Mr. Aichroth said that the remaining 90% would be advanced to the state once the HAF plan was approved by the Treasury. He reported that the HAF plan was submitted on August 18, 2021. Mr. Aichroth said that the NHD was waiting for approval of the plan.

Mr. Aichroth discussed RSF-4 (Recovery Support Function-Housing). He commented that the NHD was the lead agency for housing recovery in the state. Mr. Aichroth noted the existing relationships the NHD had with local jurisdictions, other public housing agencies, private developers, federal agencies, the Governor's Office and the State Treasurer's Office. He stated that prior to March 2020, the NHD had actively participated in pre-disaster meetings with the Division of Emergency Management and FEMA. Mr. Aichroth said they had received approval to develop over 2,100 affordable units and assisted over 1,600 home buyers during the pandemic.

Concluding, Mr. Aichroth commended his associates, legislators and the NHD team for their role in creating new housing opportunities, providing housing stability, and maintaining the programs.

## **2. Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Welfare and Supportive Services**

Margot Chappel, Deputy Administrator, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS), DHHS, provided an overview of the Nevada child care landscape (Exhibit L). She pointed out 26 projects funded by ARPA that addressed seven categories of strategic enhancements declared in the Governor's Recovery Framework. Ms. Chappel clarified that the size of each colored section in the presentation indicated the number of projects in each area rather than the dollars spent for each project.

Ms. Chappel reported that Nevada had already implemented family support, provider support and system improvement projects. She said the influx of ARPA funding had allowed the DWSS to enhance its existing programs and projects. Ms. Chappel indicated that in the presentation, existing programs were indicated in regular font and new projects were listed in bold font. She referred to a handout titled *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) and American Rescue Plan (ARP) Spending Plan Summary for Child Care* (Exhibit M) that described each of the programs.

Ms. Chappel said that changes in Nevada's child care landscape as a result of COVID-19 funding were illustrated in slide 3 (Exhibit J). She reported that prior to COVID-19, the division had experienced stagnated investments, incomplete infrastructure, frustrated families, and underpaid staff. Ms. Chappel said in May 2020, the division received \$32 million in CARES Act funding. She advised that CARES Act funding grants required that 20% be allotted to staff and 20% be used to reduce costs to families. Ms. Chappel noted that the providers would determine ideas on how to provide the 20% savings to families.

Ms. Chappel commented that efforts made by the division resulted in a low rate of closures by licensed providers during the pandemic. She said that previously the division could not pay the market rate for child care subsidies. Ms. Chappel said federal funding subsidies for licensed child care centers in Clark County had increased from \$42 per day, per child to \$52 per day, per child. She noted that additional increases were being considered. Additionally, Ms. Chappel said that the waiting list had been eliminated and funded partners were directed to process all applications.

Ms. Chappel said that the division had focused funding on targeted communities that needed additional support. She noted that provider support included operational support, workforce engagement, and improved business practices; family support consisted of cost reduction measures, increased access to quality and equity of services; and system improvements included data management and automation, policy alignment, and equitable and sustainable support.

Ms. Chappel said that Nevada had approximately 170,000 children between the ages of 0 and 12 who were at 200% of the federal poverty level. She said that in Nevada not all children at 200% of the poverty level were eligible to be served under the federal guidelines of up to 85% of the state median income. Ms. Chappel added that the current caseload was just over 7,000 children, which was about 4% of the need. She said that the division was exploring the long-term impact of increasing the subsidies. Ms. Chappel reported that before the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 10,000 children, or about 6%, received assistance. She said that the division could not sustain that caseload over time with the funding it received during the regular annual appropriation.

Ms. Chappel reiterated that there was no longer a wait list for children. She said that funding utilized to establish a pilot project was established for approximately 200 infants and toddlers in high-need areas. Ms. Chappel added that the high-quality programs would extend over the next two-year project period and the funding would include an enhanced rate to improve access to care. She said that the division would evaluate outcomes.

In response to a question from Chair Dondero Loop, Ms. Chappel replied that currently every child that had applied was being served to the highest extent possible. She reported that the DWSS had convened work groups in conjunction with the Governor's Office to find ways to serve more children and discuss options to engage more employers in child care benefits. Ms. Chappel listed options that the DWSS had considered including advising employers of increased child care benefit, workforce development, business incubation benefits, and wraparound services for children who might need behavioral support or with other needs.

In response to Chair Dondero Loop's inquiry regarding child care assistance information, Ms. Chappel noted a website, <https://nevadachildcare.org/>, where parents or providers could obtain information about subsidies, grants, services and support. She added that the Children's Cabinet in Northern Nevada and the Urban League in Southern Nevada

also provided outreach. Ms. Chappel said that one of the projects for funding listed in the handout (Exhibit M) was a virtual hub, where individuals could obtain information about the website. She said there would be physical offices in Las Vegas and Reno. Ms. Chappel noted that the Las Vegas office was scheduled to open in mid- to late-January 2022.

Senator Seevers Gansert asked if subsidies based on enrollment. She inquired about stipends provided to staff.

Ms. Chappel replied that subsidies were based on enrollment. She explained that subsidies based on enrollment provided more stable funding for recipients.

Discussion ensued between Senator Seevers Gansert and Ms. Chappel regarding stipends. Senator Seevers Gansert asked if stipends were paid per hour or per employee and whether stipends were based on enrollment. She understood that funds were being provided to facilities and she thought that stipends were being provided for individuals at child care facilities. Ms. Chappel reported that the division was considering a \$1,000 stipend for each child care provider listed on the Nevada Registry that worked in a licensed facility. She added that the stipend was contingent upon funding and should be available soon.

Senator Seevers Gansert asked how provider status would be verified. Ms. Chappel replied that providers had to be listed on the Nevada Registry and the Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children would check the registry to ensure that staff was active.

### **3. Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Public and Behavioral Health**

Debi Reynolds, Deputy Administrator, Administrative Services, Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), DHHS, and Julia Peek, Deputy Administrator, DPBH, DHHS, provided an overview of the COVID-19 funds received by the DPBH (Exhibit N). Ms. Reynolds reported that as of November 30, 2021, the DPBH had received 51 federal COVID-19 grant awards totaling nearly \$600 million. She said that the grants were used to fund a variety of activities associated with COVID-19 that included mental health treatment and prevention activities; crisis counseling; and counseling and mitigation resources for individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Ms. Reynolds added that the division was required to use the COVID-19 funds as follows:

- Ensure greater equity to racial and ethnic minority groups and diverse populations affected by COVID-19;
- Address COVID-19 therapies for high-risk and medically underserved populations;
- Expand health department staffing, communications, preparedness and mass vaccination efforts;



- Provide client education, transportation, nutrition services and short-term rent, mortgage and utility services;
- Improve testing and lab services for the Ron White program;
- Expand programs for health care coalitions, local health authorities and the hospital associations to respond to COVID-19 and address future disease outbreaks;
- Provide support for crisis response, workforce development, laboratory capacity and response and contact tracing, data modernization, screening and testing in schools, detection, and mitigation in confinement facilities; and
- Conduct COVID-19 infection surveys in assisted living and long-term care facilities.

Continuing, Ms. Reynolds reviewed the CRF Treasury reimbursements. She said the division had received just over \$8 million for payroll, overtime, PPE, and telework equipment. Ms. Reynolds added that the DPBH had received over \$80 million in CRF reimbursement for specific project initiatives for:

- Mobile outreach safety teams
- Suicide prevention
- COVID-19 containment
- Tdap and pneumonia vaccines
- Food delivery
- Laboratory and contact testing
- COVID-19 vaccine logistics, and
- National Security Agency contractors to support the IT functions for contact tracing.

Ms. Reynolds noted that the total CRF Treasury funding was approximately \$88 million. Concluding, she stated that the DPBH received over \$688 million in COVID-19 federal funding.

Ms. Peek provided an overview of the focused interventions supported by COVID-19 funding (Exhibit N). She highlighted some of the projects related to laboratory capacity, testing, disease investigation, vaccination, and public health infrastructure. Ms. Peek reiterated that the foundation for the interventions was diversity and equity.

Ms. Peek addressed laboratory capacity challenges during the pandemic. She said the DPBH collaborated with the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory and Churchill County Social Services to develop a satellite lab in Churchill County to service rural Nevada. Ms. Peek added that the division had provided IT support and equipment to address lab result turnaround times. She noted partnerships with private laboratories that improved capacity and courier issues.

Ms. Peek said that testing was a foundational part of the COVID-19 response efforts. She reported that there were a variety of testing options based on need and utilized in Nevada, including point-of-care testing and testing in targeted locations. Ms. Peek discussed partnerships with private vendors that provided improved capability for specimen collection and processing. She noted the use of federal support to provide surge testing and testing in areas with a high social vulnerability index. Ms. Peek commented that

Nevada provided testing not only for schools but also for faith-based and community-based organizations. She added that the funding also provided for additional staff to assist with testing.

Ms. Peek stated that efforts in disease investigation included increased staffing for surge testing, information technology improvements, and focused disease investigation efforts in areas of high transmission. She noted that Nevada was a forerunner in the use of exposure notification tools. Ms. Peek noted the DPBH had developed systems for online test results.

Ms. Peek reviewed vaccination outreach and education, mobile services to areas with low access, and information technology improvements. She said the vaccine call center assisted individuals in both English and Spanish to navigate vaccination services.

Ms. Peek discussed public health infrastructure. She noted that funding was used to increase administrative support to the division. Ms. Peek said quality improvement efforts centered around accreditation policies and ensuring that policies and procedures were in place. She noted staffing pipeline supports with universities and community partners were established to offer academic programs to individuals interested in becoming health professionals. Ms. Peek reported that boards of health and county health offices were instituted in all Nevada counties. She said the DPBH provided technical assistance to the county boards of health and health personnel.

Ms. Peek said the state developed the Nevada Resilience Project to build statewide crisis counseling services and resilience building resources. She noted that the Nevada Resilience Project assisted over 230,000 Nevadans with multi-lingual services provided by 39 Resilience Ambassadors. Ms. Peek added that the Nevada Resilience Project launched media campaigns and collaborated with Nevada 2-1-1 to increase awareness and support resource navigation.

Continuing, Ms. Peek reviewed suicide prevention campaigns launched in Nevada to address the increase in suicide attempts following COVID-19. She said additional training was provided to staff; social media ads addressed stigma and provided resources; a campaign was launched to target reduced access to firearms; and Clark County held a town hall meeting that focused on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Ms. Peek provided an overview of behavioral health service capacity. She noted that the DPBH supported providers to pivot to telehealth services. Ms. Peek supplied statistics from the statewide mobile crisis response teams. She added that several statewide operations were added to increase access to community crisis stabilization and inpatient behavioral health services. Ms. Peek noted there was increased access to the crisis call center.

Ms. Peek said that COVID-19 funding provided the means for mobile outreach safety teams to continue to serve those in a mental health crisis during the pandemic. In addition, she noted that the pandemic provided opportunities to review and enhance infection control practices. She commented that additional staff provided entrance screening to keep infection rates down. Ms. Peek said that clinical services had the resources and provisions necessary to maintain healthy staff, patients and vendors who entered the clinics.

Ms. Peek reported on diversity and equity projects. She acknowledged the partnership between the DPBH and Nevada's Minority Health and Equity Coalition. Ms. Peek said there was increased data collection, increased use of community health workers statewide, expanded efforts to address behavioral disparities, and support groups provided to BIPOC communities.

Concluding, Ms. Peek noted that the division would request funding in the future for therapeutics. She added that the DPBH had done its best to marry all the different funding streams to provide the best service possible to Nevadans.

Assemblywoman Tolles asked for more information about the role of the Resilience Ambassadors.

Dawn Yohey, Clinical Program Planner, DPBH, DHHS, said the 39 Resilience Ambassadors were developed through a grant provided by FEMA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. She said Resilience Ambassadors were disbursed within the division's community partners, which included Las Vegas, Washoe County and the rural counties. Ms. Yohey said that the division developed a population exposure model to determine which areas had the most need for assistance or resources. She said she would provide the information to the Subcommittee.

Assemblywoman Tolles asked about the Resilience Ambassadors' duties and how to direct individuals to that resource.

Ms. Yohey explained that Resilience Ambassadors were originally called Crisis Counselors and their role was to assist individuals who had tested positive for COVID-19 and had behavioral or physical health needs. She said that eventually the Crisis Counselors were rebranded as Resilience Ambassadors with a shift to a broader behavioral and mental health focus. Ms. Yohey added that any individual could email or telephone Crisis Support Services of Nevada to connect with a Resilience Ambassador.

In response to a question from Assemblywoman Carlton, Ms. Peek replied that funding for therapeutic treatment was not covered by grants. She added that free-standing clinics could provide therapeutic treatment and were an important part of COVID-19 response. Ms. Peek said that in Elko County, individuals could go to Great Basin College for therapeutic treatment. She reported that therapeutic treatment could reduce hospital stays and mortality by 70%. Ms. Peek said the DPBH was examining funding streams for eligibility. She remarked that there were also oral medications that would potentially be introduced in the coming months. Ms. Peek said it was important to discover how to provide those resources equitably to all Nevadans.

#### **G. REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXPENDITURE ROADMAP FOR FEDERAL FUNDING RECEIVED THROUGH THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA).**

Bailey Bortolin, Deputy Chief of Staff, Governor's Office, said the Governor's Office was developing a plan for the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars for the next phase of funding. She noted that these funds would expire in 2024.

Shauna Tilley, Executive Branch Budget Officer, GFO, provided an update on the ARPA funds (Exhibit O). She said Nevada's share of these funds was estimated at \$6.7 billion, which did not include an estimated \$4 billion in economic impact payments and child tax credit expansions sent directly to taxpayers. She noted over 79 funding streams available through ARPA funds.

Ms. Tilley noted 12 categories of aid. She directed attention to the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSLFRF). Ms. Tilley said the CSLFRF provided over \$2.7 billion, of which \$1.88 billion had not yet been allocated.

Ms. Bortolin stated that the three agencies that testified earlier were just a few of the many agencies that had received aid. She added that many state agencies used various funding sources to assist communities.

Ms. Tilley noted a total of 52 work programs had either been approved to date or would be considered at the December 9, 2021, Interim Finance Committee meeting. Those work programs included a portion of the \$2.7 billion in state general aid. She added that many programs varied in performance periods and allowable uses. Ms. Tilley reported that several programs had the same allowance. She said that decisions regarding allocation of dollars would provide the best usage of the available funds.

Ms. Bortolin said there were billions of dollars in aid coming to the State of Nevada. She expected that the state general aid bucket would be spent down to \$1.88 billion. Ms. Bortolin pointed out that the state general aid funding was the primary consideration for the needs occurring in Nevada's communities.

Ms. Tilley said that local governments were eligible for \$1.04 billion in payments that would be provided in two tranches. She noted total state allocations of \$2.78 billion in CSLFRFs. Ms. Tilley discussed multiple funding streams. She clarified that funding would be allocated to communities, local entities, and to the state. Ms. Tilley said that the allowable uses were focused on public health, economic impact, and investments in infrastructure (defined by Treasury guidance as broadband, sewer and water). She emphasized that recipients must demonstrate that funding uses would directly address the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Ms. Tilley pointed out the differences between ARPA funding and other COVID-19 relief funding requirements.

Heather Hilliard, IEM, discussed the key points of the ARPA eligibility requirements (Exhibit M). She said there were different expenses that may or may not be eligible under the Treasury Interim Final Rule. Ms. Hilliard reported that the GFO was forming work groups to disseminate information received from public comment portals, legislative groups, and state agencies to ensure that the information was applicable, not duplicative.

Ms. Hilliard reported that \$4.04 billion had been allocated to Nevada for infrastructure. She noted that eligible items, which included water, sewer and broadband, also had funding designated in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Ms. Hillard stated that the GFO was waiting for more guidance from the Treasury. She said the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding was more specific and inflexible. Ms. Hilliard said that projects eligible for funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act were allocated to that fund and other projects were earmarked for more flexible funding sources.

Ms. Bortolin provided an update on conclusive data from the Nevada Recovers Listening Tour. She reported that more than 4,000 responses were received from the Nevada Recovers website (<https://nevadarecovers.com/>). Of those 4,000, 2,500 were found to be valid submissions. Ms. Bortolin discussed the process of discovering and considering ideas, how the information would align with Treasury guidelines, and interplay with state statutes, rules, and guidelines. Ms. Bortolin shared the five Listening Tour priorities:

- Housing security
- Accessible, quality child care
- Job creation and retention
- COVID-19 and health care
- Strengthening education

Ms. Bortolin stated that the GFO wanted to create a robust comprehensive housing plan and a comprehensive child care plan, while considering ideas and exploring how to evaluate those ideas.

Ms. Hilliard discussed the grant logic model used to map, analyze and implement all of the past submissions. She said that the GFO used a data set information tool to take ideas received from the portal and the Listening Tour and determine if there was any similarity of services at the regional, local or state level. She discussed different funding sources and the Build Back Better Act (H.R. 5376), currently in the U.S. Senate, that would provide more health care and child care dollars. Ms. Hilliard said that it was important to use the most restrictive funding first and leave the flexible ARPA dollars for other uses.

Ms. Hilliard discussed the importance of a fiscal reasonableness test that would result in executive approval and documented revenue expenditures for clean Treasury reporting before the programs began.

Ms. Bortolin said that the next step would be to review and evaluate each idea. She said it was crucial to ensure that every decision was intentional and worked well together. Ms. Bortolin said that it was important to research solutions and best practices and communicate with cities, counties and school districts. She said it was necessary to locate areas where there was a possibility of overlap or duplication of efforts to ensure that dollars were used to make a real investment in Nevada.

In response to a question from Assemblywoman Tolles, Ms. Bortolin reiterated that over 4,100 responses were received, 2,500 of which contained specific ideas. She explained the difference between true idea submissions and general information.

Assemblywoman Tolles wondered if there would be a final report that would map out the information received, the number of ideas accepted, and the amount of funding requests versus the amount allocated.

Ms. Bortolin responded that the Nevada Recovers website would reflect data and be a good source of information. She said she would provide more specific information at a future meeting. Ms. Bortolin said that the Listening Tour had produced a final report, which she would provide to the Subcommittee.

Assemblywoman Tolles asked about the next step after an idea was approved. She asked if the agency or organization would need to follow up with a grant application.

Ms. Bortolin said that the information received from the portal was not comprehensive enough to automatically award funding. She explained the process for funding once an idea was approved.

In response to a question from Senator Brooks, Ms. Hilliard said the first part of the contract would end in June 2022.

Senator Brooks discussed the alignment of the various funding sources with the Governor's submission of The Executive Budget. Ms. Hilliard said it was IEM's intention to help Nevadans make those important decisions both now and in the future.

Assemblywoman Monroe Moreno commented that if a request would not qualify under the guidelines for ARPA funding, it could be suitable for funding from a different source. She gave an example of infrastructure funding.

Ms. Bortolin said that the GFO intended to be collaborative and work with a variety of ideas. She commented that there were 70 ARPA funding streams, and the GFO regularly becomes aware of new funding streams. Ms. Bortolin reported that the GFO recently received a new stream of funding for \$25 million that would go directly to rural counties. She said the passage of Build Back Better Act would also change the landscape for Nevada. Ms. Bortolin commented on the complexity of funding issues.

## **H. PUBLIC COMMENT.**

Jane Amone, External Affairs Director, the Nature Conservancy (Conservancy), provided written testimony (Exhibit P). She said the Conservancy compiled recommendations for addressing budget shortfalls, enhancing state services, investing in infrastructure and supporting Nevada's workforce using the guidance provided in the Every Nevadan Recovery Framework.

Ms. Amone said the Conservancy identified areas where enhanced state services were necessary to address budget shortfalls in the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Water Resources (DWR). She emphasized that the DWR should be fully staffed and resourced. Ms. Amone added that the Conservancy recommended that \$1.3 million in ARPA funding be allocated to reimburse water basin funds that were transferred to the State General Fund to support staffing shortfalls during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Amone said that the Conservancy recommended enhanced state services to address challenges that emerged during the pandemic and provide a solid foundation for the state's recovery, and position Nevada for resiliency in the face of climate change. She recommended investment in the Smart from the Start renewable energy development, habitat registration for native freshwater species, and the construction of wildlife crossings to protect human and animal safety.

Ms. Amone added that the Conservancy recommended that ARPA funds be used to support workforce development. She suggested the creation of a state Climate Conservation Corps to deliver workforce training, career development and implementation of work in areas of clean energy, climate planning, disaster resilience, ecosystem restoration, parks maintenance and wildfire risk reduction.

Ms. Amone said that the Conservancy commended Governor Sisolak, Treasurer Conine, and the State of Nevada for providing the Listening Tour. She thanked the Subcommittee for its oversight and guidance.

Priscilla Maloney, representative for the American Federal of State, County and Municipal Employees Retirees, requested funding to restore the PEBP funding cuts made during the 31<sup>st</sup> Special Session (2020) to meet the crisis needs resulting from the pandemic. She reported PEBP had been advised by the Governor's Office that there were no funds available to restore PEBP benefits to the pre-pandemic level. Ms. Maloney said she appreciated the complexities of what the subcommittee was handling and asked for its consideration of the PEBP request. She offered to provide the PEBP meeting documents to the Subcommittee.

Kent Ervin, President, Nevada Faculty Alliance, provided written testimony (Exhibit Q). He expressed concerned about reduced benefits to the PEBP program due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Ervin reported that PEBP was considering plan design changes for FY 2023. He urged the authorization of ARPA or other state funds to fully restore program benefits to state employees.

Casey Rodgers testified about the border crisis and therapeutic treatments for individuals diagnosed with COVID-19.

Douglas Unger, President, UNLV Chapter of the Nevada Faculty Alliance, submitted testimony for the record (Exhibit R).

Edward Goodrich submitted testimony for the record (Exhibit S).

Terri Laird, Executive Director, Representing Public Employees of Nevada (RPEN) submitted testimony for the record (Exhibit T).

## **I. ADJOURNMENT.**

Chair Dondero Loop adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Sally Trotter, Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED:

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Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_