



**STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SIERRA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING**

Lee Adams, District 1

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Lila Heuer, District 2

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The Sierra County Board of Supervisors met in regular session commencing at 9:00 a.m. on February 3, 2026. Locations available to the public to attend will be at the Board of Supervisors' Chambers, Courthouse, Downieville, CA and the Hilton Nashville Downtown Lobby, 121 Fourth Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37201. This meeting was recorded for posting on the Board of Supervisors' website at www.sierracounty.ca.gov.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Supervisor LeBlanc

ROLL CALL

Present: Lee Adams, Supervisor, District #1
Lila Heuer, Supervisor, District #2
Paul Roen, Chair, District #3
Terry LeBlanc, Supervisor, District #4
Sharon Dryden, Vice-Chair, Supervisor, District #5

Staff: Heather Foster, County Clerk-Recorder
Melissa Kinneer, Assistant County Clerk-Recorder
Chuck Henson, Chief Probation Officer
Tony Miller, County Auditor
Sheryl Prinz-McMillan, Director of Behavioral Health
Rhonda Grandi, Assistant Director of Public Health
Brandon Pangman, Planning/Building Director/Interim

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Public Works/Transportation Director
Andrew Plett, County Counsel
Judi Behlke, Personnel Director

Chair Roen passed the gavel to Vice-Chair Dryden.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

The Assistant County Clerk-Recorder clarified on the record that the correct quoted amount for consent item 15.H. is \$27,732.69, including \$1,060.59 in sales tax. The vendor provided an updated quote after the agenda was published. The agenda listed an incorrect amount, though the background materials reflect the updated figure.

The Board moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

APPROVED. Motion: LeBlanc/Heuer/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 5/0

15. CONSENT AGENDA

- 15.A. Presentation of bids summary and adoption of resolution awarding contract for the Long Valley Road 2023 Storm Damage Repair Project to Hansen Bros. Enterprises for thirty (30) working days from the date of commencement of the project in an amount not to exceed \$414,853.80. (PUBLIC WORKS)

ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-010

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-012

- 15.B. Professional services agreement between CreativeEnvironmental and the County of Sierra for the Habitat Mitigation & Monitoring for Plumbago Road Bridge Replacement over Kanaka Creek in an amount not to exceed \$106,189 for a term of five (5) years. (PUBLIC WORKS)

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-013

- 15.C. Authorization to accept quote from Cascade Software Systems to migrate from on-premises services to WinCAMs Cloud services in an amount not to exceed \$4,300. (PUBLIC WORKS)
- 15.D. Resolution authorizing Public Health to hire the vacant Health Assistant position at the Health Assistant III, Step E, Longevity 2 level. (PUBLIC HEALTH)

ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-011

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- 15.E. Agreement between the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools and the County of Sierra for use of the 2025-2026 Cannabis Mini Grant from the California Friday Night Live (FNL) Partnership for youth-led cannabis prevention and education campaigns from October 1, 2025, through June 12, 2026, in an amount not to exceed \$3,000. (BEHAVIORAL HEALTH)

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-014

- 15.F. Rescission of Agreement 2026-009 and approval of agreement between the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) and County of Sierra for participation in External Quality Review and Performance Improvement Projects, in an amount not to exceed \$17,280 for Fiscal Year 2025/2026. (BEHAVIORAL HEALTH)

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-015

- 15.G. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools and the County of Sierra for the implementation of the 2025-2026 Friday Night Live (FNL) Thirdhand Smoke Test Kit Project (Thirdhand Smoke Project) from October 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. (BEHAVIORAL HEALTH)

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-016

- 15.H. Ratify approval of quote from Monarch for Access Control and Security Cameras in an amount not to exceed \$26,672.10. (BEHAVIORAL HEALTH)
- 15.I. Resolution amending designation of the County Official responsible for administration of the Sierra County Solid Waste Benefit Assessment Fee Program. (CLERK OF THE BOARD)

ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-012

- 15.J. Resolution adopting amended Schedule D, Clerk-Recorder, Schedule I, Probation, and Schedule F, Health & Social Services/Behavioral Health to Resolution 2018-024, Sierra County Fee Schedule. (CLERK OF THE BOARD)

ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-013

- 15.K. Resolution approving the consolidation of the Sierra City Fire District Special Election with the County's Statewide Direct Primary Election to be held on June 2, 2026. (ELECTIONS)

ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-014

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- 15.L. Grant agreement between the California Electronic Recording Transaction Network Authority (CERTNA) and the County of Sierra for reimbursement of direct costs associated with implementing an Electronic Recording Delivery System (ERDS), in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for a one-year term; and adoption of a resolution authorizing the Auditor to make certain changes to the 2025/2026 Final Budget to account for the grant funds. (CLERK-RECORDER)

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-017

ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-015

- 15.M. Rescission of Agreement 2026-008 and approval of amendment to Agreement 2022-019 between the County of Sierra and Tyler Technologies, Inc. for the implementation of electronic recording services, including a one-time cost of \$6,395 and ongoing annual costs of \$3,995. (CLERK-RECORDER)

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-018

APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

At the request of the Interim Public Works Director, urgency Item 11.D. was added to the regular agenda.

- 11.D. Authorization to hire two (2) Road Maintenance Workers at Level I, Step E immediately; with permission to promote both positions to a Level III, Step A upon successfully securing their Class A Driver's License.**

County Counsel inquired on the urgency of the matter.

The Interim Director of Public Works stated that the decision was driven by low staffing levels, anticipated winter storms, and broader public safety concerns.

After brief discussion, the Board moved to approve the Regular Agenda as amended.

APPROVED as amended. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 5/0

2. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

At 9:06 the public comment opportunity was opened and closed.

3. COMMITTEE REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Supervisor Adams reported that the Tri-County Air Board met last Monday, during which Supervisor Roen was appointed Chair. He also provided an update on the recent RCRC meeting, noting that Mariposa County now chairs RCRC and that committee assignments have been finalized, with him continuing as Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee. Additionally, he reported that the RCRC Predator Committee met yesterday and held discussions with the new California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) leadership.

Supervisor Roen expressed appreciation to the Sheriff for testifying before Assemblywoman Hadwick's Parks and Recreation Committee in Sacramento and noted that the County was well represented at the predator related hearing.

4. DEPARTMENT MANAGERS' REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Interim Director of Public Works reported on significant activity on the transportation side, including coordination with the Forest Service on three upcoming resiliency projects; 89 acres of forest thinning on Mountain House; 550 acres of roadside thinning on Saddleback; and roadside thinning at the Lava site on Highway 49 between Goodyears Bar and Lavezzola, with bidding schedules expected to be developed in the coming weeks.

Interim Director Pangman provided additional updates on the Plumbago Bridge project nearing completion, with the bridge rail to be installed Monday, allowing the detour to be removed, and approximately 14 days of work remaining once construction resumes in the spring; progress on the Smithneck project nearing completion of CEQA and NEPA work; renovations of County offices at 704 Mill Street in Loyalton at 90% completion and under budget; work at 202 Front Street in Loyalton at 75% completion within budget; and the Brandy City 2023 storm repair plans expected to be finalized by month's end for a March 3rd bid.

Interim Director Pangman also recognized Billy Epps, Engineer Technician III, for his persistence in securing over \$250,000 in state California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) funding for the 2023 winter storms after multiple federal rejections.

The Director of Behavioral Health reported on new hires in the department.

5. FOREST SERVICE UPDATE

Yuba District Ranger Thomas Parrack reported that the SO has received approvals, including the arrival of a bridge specialist engineer to support local load ratings and timber harvest bridge design, as well as the determination needed for the Girl Scout Camp bridge to move forward with a potential sale or transfer. He added that he is most pleased to finally have design approval for the Sandbridge boardwalk, which was delayed due to the lack of a qualified engineer to review the plans.

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Ranger Parrack also reported on increased minerals permitting activity for the Highway 49 corridor due to current gold prices; upcoming seasonal hiring across Yuba and American River districts; summer visitor services staffing in Downieville; and anticipated Caltrans work on Highway 49 that may affect timber harvest operations.

Ranger Parrack noted on this being his last meeting and expressed appreciation to the people and tremendous resources he has worked with, stating it has been an honor to serve.

Vice-Chair Dryden thanked Ranger Parrack for his consistent and transparent service to Sierra County, and Supervisor Adams offered congratulations on his upcoming retirement.

Toiyabe District Ranger Matthew Zumstein reported that approximately 50 acres of piles are being prepared for burning once snow conditions allow, and that work continues toward advancing the mud sale, though road issues require engineering review and updated discussions to support potential road improvements after last year's no bid outcome. He noted that all recreation infrastructure is closed for the winter and that law enforcement is addressing ongoing dumping issues near Verdi.

6. PROBATION - CHUCK HENSON

- 6.A. Authorization to advertise and hire for the Deputy Probation Officer I-III position due to a vacancy occurring on April 24, 2026.

The Chief Probation Officer requested authorization to advertise and begin the hiring process for a Deputy Probation Officer position in anticipation of Deputy Scott Quade's retirement on April 24th, which will leave the department short staffed by one of its three sworn positions. He emphasized the critical public safety role of the adult services position, which manages high risk and high needs offenders, parolees, sex offenders, and collaborative court cases, noting that the other sworn positions are restricted by pretrial and juvenile funding requirements. He explained that onboarding for law enforcement roles is lengthy and increasingly difficult due to state and medical testing, background, and academy requirements, and that the position is fully funded through Senate Bill (SB) 678 realignment funds.

Supervisor Adams inquired about the appropriate hiring level for the position based on the applicant's qualifications.

Chief Henson confirmed the recruitment would be for a Deputy Probation Officer I-III, not the senior level position equivalent to the Chief, due to current financial considerations and increased labor costs.

Discussion ensued with the Board.

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After brief discussion, the Board moved to authorize advertising and to fill the Deputy Probation Officer I-III position due to a vacancy occurring on April 24, 2026.

APPROVED. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 5/0

- 6.B. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Tuolumne County and the County of Sierra for the placement of detained juveniles at the Mother Lode Juvenile Detention Facility from February 3, 2026, through June 30, 2028, with two additional one-year periods through June 30, 2030, in an amount not to exceed \$182,500 per Fiscal Year.

The Chief Probation Officer reported on the proposed juvenile detention contract with Tuolumne County, noting that after touring the Sonora facility in November he was impressed with its operations, medical and mental health services, and specialized juvenile sex offender treatment. He explained that, like existing contracts with Placer and Butte counties, Tuolumne would only incur costs when used, providing an important backup option given the hardship of placement in juvenile halls and limited bed availability. He added that Tuolumne offers competitive rates for detention, camp level services, and secure track placements previously handled by the state and would strengthen the County's ability to place youth when needed.

Vice-Chair Dryden commented on accompanying Chief Henson on several facility tours and remarked on being particularly impressed with the industrial arts program observed at the Butte County facility. She further expressed appreciation for the range of services available through the Tuolumne facility, noting that the variety helps ensure juveniles can be placed in programs that best meet their individual needs.

Supervisor Adams remarked on the high cost of juvenile placement services, noting the irony that competitive rates now range from \$250 to \$500 per day and expressed appreciation for the Chief's comments regarding the increasing difficulty of securing juvenile hall placements, observing that Nevada County operated its former hall for decades, built a new facility, and now is closed, with plans to repurpose the building possibly as an indoor firearms range.

The Board moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Tuolumne County and the County of Sierra for the placement of detained juveniles at the Mother Lode Juvenile Detention Facility from February 3, 2026, through June 30, 2028, with two additional one-year periods through June 30, 2030, in an amount not to exceed \$182,500 per Fiscal Year.

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-019. Motion: Adams/Heuer/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 5/0

7. AUDITOR - TONY MILLER

- 7.A. Discussion/direction regarding a controlled, short-term financial systems reset to address structural weakness in the County's chart of accounts,

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treasury accounting, inter fund practices, and financial reporting processes to outline a path forward for selection and implementation of a modern enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

The Auditor provided an overview of the county's increasingly complex financial operations and outlined a proposed two-part strategy to strengthen accounting practices, beginning with a comprehensive cleanup and restructuring of the chart of accounts, followed by implementation of a new accounting system. He emphasized the need for a controlled reset rather than gradual changes, noting that external CPA support will be required to complete the work within a 90 to 120-day window to launch a new chart of accounts by July 1st and align it with the fiscal year 2026/2027 budget process. He added that enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementation would follow with a targeted go-live date of July 1, 2027. He clarified that the item does not allege misconduct, require restatements, or select any vendors, and requested direction from the Board on next steps as he continues identifying qualified external CPA firms.

Supervisor Adams, reported on the discussions held with the Finance Committee regarding the proposal, acknowledging that the cost will be significant, likely in the six-figure range, but also the result of decades of accumulated complexity. He appreciated the Auditor's clarification that the effort does not allege misconduct or require restating prior audits but reflects the need to modernize and improve efficiency. He emphasized the importance of vetting the proposal with department managers, given both the operational impacts and the potential budget implications. He concluded by expressing hope that a modernized system will ultimately improve efficiency and reduce long-term costs.

Supervisor Roen concurred with Supervisor Adams' comments, stating that he, the Auditor, and others have held extensive discussions over the past several weeks and that feedback from the department managers' meeting was positive. He reiterated longstanding concerns raised over the past few years and stated that it is time for the County to modernize its financial systems, expressing confidence that the proposed changes will improve operations for both the Board and department managers.

The Auditor provided additional clarification, emphasizing that new accounting software alone will not resolve the County's financial challenges. He noted that the most significant work will involve behavioral and structural changes in financial practices, as well as a shift in mindset across departments. While the right tool will improve efficiency, the success of the project will depend on adopting consistent, modernized accounting processes. He shared that recent meetings with departments have been encouraging, with broad recognition of the need for greater financial transparency and timeliness.

Vice-Chair Dryden emphasized the need to avoid repeating the challenges of this year's budget process, describing it as unpredictable and overly dependent on institutional knowledge held by a single individual. She noted that while prior staff managed the system effectively for many years, the lack of a modern, transparent structure makes it difficult for new personnel and unsustainable for the County's future.

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She stressed that investing in updated financial systems is essential for long-term stability, especially given evolving regulations. She thanked the Auditor and Finance Committee for bringing the issue forward early, acknowledged the significant workload and financial commitment required, and expressed appreciation for the department head's willingness to engage in necessary change.

The Auditor stated that he intends to return to the March 3rd meeting with a more finalized proposal for Board approval and is working now to avoid delays. He explained that he has contacted approximately eight CPA firms, with two having responded so far, and will continue following up to secure additional options. He noted that some firms appear more nonprofit focused while others have deeper governmental expertise and emphasized the importance of selecting the strongest firm given the tight 120-day timeline. He also confirmed that he has been reviewing ERP system demonstrations and has narrowed the list of potential systems from roughly ten to four.

Supervisor Adams suggested that the Auditor continue working with the Finance Committee and department managers before bringing the matter back for approval. He noted that the Board would want buy-in from both groups.

Vice-Chair Dryden stated that the Board may want a presentation from the firm selected to implement the ERP system to better understand the scope of services and timeline. She emphasized the importance of a solid chart of accounts as the foundation of the system and noted that the firm must be experienced and add value to the County. She added that while reliance on staff's recommendations is acceptable, a presentation from the firm could also be beneficial.

Supervisor Adams stated that the County has previously relied on vendors and subject matter experts when making major system purchases and that he is comfortable deferring to expert recommendations on what is necessary.

The Auditor stated that he has been including department heads, fiscal staff, security, and compliance personnel in the discussions.

The Board directed the Auditor to continue working with department heads, fiscal staff, security, and compliance personnel on the matter.

8. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH - SHERYLL PRINZ-MCMILLAN

8.A. Discussion/authorization for the use of clothing and gear for the Mobile Crisis Responders in the Behavioral Health Department.

The Director of Behavioral Health revisited the issue of identifiable mobile crisis clothing, noting that the Board had previously advised limiting its use to active crisis responses. She explained that this has proven impractical, as emergencies occur without warning and staff cannot change clothes before responding. She requested approval for on-call staff to wear designated Behavioral Health T-shirts, jackets, or hats during their

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on-call periods so they can be immediately identifiable as non-law enforcement responders. She emphasized that clear identification supports de-escalation and safety, citing situations where individuals explicitly stated they would not engage safely with law enforcement but would with Behavioral Health. She added that the state encourages such identification and that other mobile crisis teams statewide use similar clothing. She asked the Board for further direction on allowing staff to wear the items while on call.

Supervisor LeBlanc expressed support for allowing on-call mobile crisis staff to wear the designated Behavioral Health uniform, noting that it is appropriate, clearly non-law enforcement, and helps the public identify emergency response personnel. He emphasized the need for immediate response and recommended permitting its use while staff are on duty and on call.

Director Prinz-McMillan added that the issue was presented to the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee and noted that the identifiable attire supports positive community outreach. She reported that crisis response volumes exceeded expectations, with approximately 25 crisis line responses last quarter and many additional calls routed through 911 and direct contacts, resulting in frequent mobile crisis deployments.

Supervisor Adams clarified that his concern was not with the use of mobile clothing but with the appearance of extravagance in certain high-end items. He stated he was comfortable with the items already purchased being used but requested that future purchases be brought to the Board for review, emphasizing the need to distinguish between needs and wants and to avoid disparities between departments.

Discussion ensued with the Board.

Vice-Chair Dryden emphasized that the clothing should only be worn during work hours while staff are representing Sierra County in their mobile crisis role, and not while they are off duty. She then asked the Personnel Director whether the County has an existing uniform policy.

The Personnel Director confirmed that the County does not have a uniform policy for departments other than the Sheriff's Office and Probation.

Vice-Chair Dryden commented that there was no objection to staff using the mobile-crisis identification clothing but emphasized concerns about how the purchases occurred and the associated costs. She stressed the need for awareness and caution when spending public funds, including grant funds, and underscored the importance of ensuring that all expenditures appropriately represent Sierra County.

Supervisor Adams added that although the current items were purchased with dedicated state funding, any future replacement or expansion of uniforms could fall to the General Fund.

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The Board authorized the use of clothing and gear for the Mobile Crisis Responders in the Behavioral Health Department.

14. TIMED ITEMS

14.A. 10:00AM - RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

Presentation of Resolution of Appreciation and recognition of retirement for Edward Cusato, Sierra County Road Maintenance Supervisor.

Vice-Chair Dryden presented the resolution of appreciation and recognized Mr. Cusato for his years of dedicated service to the County.

Supervisor LeBlanc expressed appreciation for Mr. Cusato and the entire Alleghany Road Crew, noting that they were quick to respond when assistance was needed with snow removal and other support. He added that crews from all districts, including the west side and east side worked collaboratively and effectively, and stated that it had been an honor to work with them. He thanked the teams for their dedication and service.

Supervisor Adams acknowledged the difficulty of snow removal throughout the county, noting that the Ridge presents unique challenges due to its geography and elevation. He commended the crew for performing exceptionally well despite having a very small team. He emphasized the importance of their work, highlighting the absence of drama, incidents, or accidents, and remarked on how seamlessly and almost invisibly the crew operates. He concluded by recognizing that 25 years of service is a significant milestone.

Public member Colin O'Mara Green thanked Mr. Cusato for his kindness, mentorship, and the practical knowledge he shared. From equipment operation to truck-driving and logging experience and stated his gratitude for the guidance passed down over the years.

Public member Tim Beals praised Mr. Cusato as a good friend, a valuable employee, and an exceptional representative of the County whose pride in his work and dedication to the communities of Alleghany, Pike, and Forest City consistently made the job easier. He added that Mr. Cusato's contributions set a high standard on the Ridge and expressed hope that his level of service will one day be matched.

9. PUBLIC HEALTH - RHONDA GRANDI

9.A. Agreement between the County of Nevada and County of Sierra for the provision of WIC (Women, Infants and Children) nutrition counseling, training, and technical assistance services in an amount not to exceed \$12,000 from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026.

The Director of Public Health reported on the agreement providing registered dietitian services and professional nutrition oversight for the Women, Infants, and

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Children (WIC) program. She explained that the County's long-time contracted dietitian previously provided through Plumas County retired at the end of the last fiscal year, creating the need for a new arrangement. The agreement with Nevada County offers flexibility to obtain oversight on an as-needed basis. She noted that the contract underwent extensive review by the State, County Counsel, and Nevada County Counsel.

The Board moved to approve the Agreement between the County of Nevada and County of Sierra for the provision of WIC (Women, Infants and Children) nutrition counseling, training, and technical assistance services in an amount not to exceed \$12,000 from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026.

APPROVED, Agreement 2026-020. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 5/0

10. PLANNING / BUILDING - BRANDON PANGMAN

- 10.A. Authorization to advertise and hire for the vacant Administrative Secretary position for the Planning Department in accordance with County personnel policies and procedures.

The Planning Director reported that the newly appointed Planning Administrative Secretary resigned for personal reasons, leaving the two planners to cover all secretarial, accounting, and minute-taking duties. Due to the workload and ongoing hiring freeze, he requested authorization to advertise and backfill the position at levels I through III, depending on applicant qualifications.

The Board moved to authorize the advertising and to fill the vacant Administrative Secretary position for the Planning Department in accordance with County personnel policies and procedures.

APPROVED. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 5/0

- 10.B. Set a public hearing for decision on the General Plan Amendment/Zone Amendment and Williamson Act Contract Amendment for Lucy Blake, 222 Lemmon Canyon Road, Sierraville (APNs 018-030-005 & 018-030-006).

The Director of Planning recommended holding the public hearing on the east side of the County on March 17th to allow additional time to obtain requested documents from the applicant. He noted that the project has been reviewed by the Open Space Screening Committee and the Planning Commission, which forwarded a resolution of recommendation, and that scheduling the hearing on March 17th would ensure all final documents, including the legal description, are complete and ready for recording.

The Board set the public hearing for decision on the General Plan Amendment/Zone Amendment and Williamson Act Contract Amendment for Lucy Blake,

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222 Lemmon Canyon Road, Sierraville (APNs 018-030-005 & 018-030-006) on March 17th at 10:00 a.m.

11. PUBLIC WORKS/TRANSPORTATION

11.A. Continued discussion and direction regarding the acceptance of green waste and burn policies at the County's solid waste transfer sites.

The Interim Director of Public Works reported on two issues: addressing the oversized green waste piles at the Sierra City Transfer Station, including whether they could be safely burned, and long-term green waste management for the County. He noted that staff had developed recommendations and sought direction from the Board on both short-term and long-term measures, including risk mitigation.

He reported that a site meeting was held at the Sierra City Transfer Station on January 22nd with representatives from the Forest Service, Sierra City Volunteer Fire Department, Supervisor Heuer, and Road Department staff to review site conditions and clarify misconceptions about pile accumulation. The consensus was that the piles could be burned safely, or with mitigated risk. He noted that the large diameter pile, estimated at 2,500 cubic yards, would not be burned in place but gradually fed into the main burn pile as it was reduced.

He noted that both the West and East Road Superintendents had expressed concerns about burning at the Sierra City site and acknowledged the competing pressures between providing low-cost green waste disposal for defensible space and managing operational and safety risks. He emphasized that while accessible disposal is important to prevent illegal dumping, green waste management is not free, and at least two sites present significant risk under current practices, highlighting the need for long-term solutions.

Regarding the Sierra City piles, he outlined risk-reduction measures for burning the accumulated material: the County would not accept additional green waste at the site until the piles were reduced, and no material larger than 10 inches in diameter would be accepted, a policy in place since the previous summer, which he recommended remain in effect due to safety concerns.

Vice-Chair Dryden asked whether there had been any discussion about lowering the allowable diameter, noting that even 10 inches was quite large. She inquired whether reducing it to 6 or 8 inches had been considered.

Billy Epps, Engineer Technician III, stated that the allowable diameter had been widely discussed, including consultations with other counties, most of which allow 12–14 inches. He explained that, based on the Road Crew's experience with burns, keeping material as small as possible is essential, and the 10-inch limit was determined to be the most practical.

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Interim Director Pangman reported that staff had been developing new standard operating procedures to clarify safe burning practices, including monitoring and mop-up requirements. A draft had been circulated to the Forest Service, local fire departments, the Road Crew, and the Sheriff's Office, with comments being incorporated.

He emphasized that no further burning at the Sierra City site, or any site, should occur until clear standard operating procedures are in place to ensure accountability and provide explicit guidance to on-site personnel, including verification checks before ignition. He stressed that the procedures are intended to prevent incidents and allow the County to review compliance if an escape or other issue occurs.

He clarified that no active fire had ever escaped during an initial burn at the Sierra City or Sattley sites. Past incidents occurred weeks later, when smoldering ash piles reignited unexpectedly. While staff had been monitoring flare-ups, an unexpected wind event carried embers off-site when no one was present to respond, which had caused the previous incidents.

He noted that while ensuring safe ignition was important, the greater challenge from the County's perspective was how to monitor the piles afterward, given limited staffing, limited hours of operation at the transfer sites, and the small footprint available for burning. The real difficulty was managing mop-up and monitoring for several weeks after a burn, not just during the initial hours. He stated that this challenge was a key focus of the new standard operating procedures, which aimed to address long-term monitoring and mop-up requirements.

He continued reviewing the list of mitigation measures. Based on the Sheriff's recommendation, staff proposed installing an additional camera at the Sierra City site. He explained that although the County already has several cameras in place, they are only effective when someone actively logs in to monitor them, and they do not replace real-time oversight. Game cameras at the solid waste sites have been useful for addressing theft and vandalism but are not continuously monitored.

He recommended installing new cameras with both daytime and night-vision capability, supported by Starlink connectivity, to allow for continuous 24/7 operation. The Sheriff had offered the use of dispatch staff to monitor the cameras, particularly during nighttime hours when Road Crew staff are not present, and to develop a policy requiring dispatch to check the cameras at regular intervals so that any issue could be detected and addressed as early as possible.

He further stated that it would be reasonable to install dedicated water tanks at the Sierra City site, and eventually at all sites, along with pumps or hydrants. A Forest Service representative had suggested installing a simple sprinkler system that could be turned on periodically to keep the area damp. He noted that there was currently no water source on site, and while the County does have a water truck that rotates among sites, a dedicated tank would significantly reduce risk.

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He also clarified that the burn permit for industrial-level burning is more stringent than a residential permit, with burns allowed only from December 1st through late March, depending on conditions. Ignition would occur only under ideal conditions and in compliance with permit requirements and standard operating procedures. He added that the Forest Service, local fire departments, the Sheriff's Office, and other partners would be notified in advance of any planned burn. He reiterated that the large piles will not be ignited at once. Materials will be fed into them gradually, especially when dealing with the larger diameter debris. He emphasized that a controlled, methodical approach will be taken, and that conditions will not be created that will lead to another forest fire.

He stated that all reasonable recommendations have been made and will be implemented before the Sierra City pile is ignited. One burning window has been missed, and staff are currently waiting for snow, with the goal of being fully prepared to begin burning as soon as conditions allow. This remains the immediate concern for Sierra City.

Looking at the long-term countywide picture, there are five transfer sites where burning occurs. The question is what recommendations we should consider for handling green waste going forward.

He reported on a January 28 special meeting of the Solid Waste Task Force Committee focused on countywide green waste disposal. Mr. Epps presented options, proposals, cost breakdowns, and alternatives, including continued open burning, living burn piles, relocating material, curtain burners, hauling to other sites, delivery to Delleker Transfer Station or Loyaltan Landfill, chipping, and combinations thereof. The Task Force consensus was that there is currently no support for increased assessments or green waste gate fees, and no such fees are currently charged. Staff recommended informing the public that green waste disposal, even with open burning, incurs costs and that alternative methods would be more expensive. The Task Force consensus remained to keep disposal inexpensive and accessible, avoiding fees to prevent discouraging participation and increasing fire hazards. The recommendation was that, with proper mitigation, burning operations can likely continue at Sierra City and other sites.

Interim Director Pangman emphasized prioritizing installation of water tanks, pumps, hydrants, cameras, Starlink, and related equipment. He recommended implementing improvements in the following order: Sierra City, Sattley, Alleghany, with remaining sites to follow. Equipping all five sites would cost approximately \$40,000, or about \$8,000 per site if done individually. He further requested direction from the Board on returning with a formal agenda item that includes a detailed funding request, complete cost breakdowns, and proposed funding sources.

He reported that current green waste management practices are financially unsustainable, even with open burning, the lowest-cost but highest-risk option. Site superintendents expressed concern about continued burning at smaller, higher-risk sites such as Sattley and Sierra City. The Solid Waste Task Force emphasized pursuing long-term alternatives, including the possibility of grants or funding for a shared regional green

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waste facility with Plumas County. All disposal methods are costly, highlighting the need for structural changes.

Supervisor Roen expressed confidence that staff can safely address the current green waste pile at the Sierra City Transfer Station and supported proceeding with burning it when weather conditions allow. Looking ahead, the Board and Solid Waste Task Force will need to discuss potential operational changes, including when and how transfer sites might limit access if necessary. While long-term solutions are needed, it was noted that burning will likely remain part of green waste management during optimal times of year, used alongside other methods. He expressed willingness to continue working collaboratively on future solutions.

Interim Director Pangman noted the need to develop long-term green waste management solutions, acknowledging that future changes will incur additional costs. While the Solid Waste Task Force is not recommending fee increases, continued reliance on open burning requires immediate risk-reduction measures. He recommended allocating approximately \$8,000 per site for safety improvements and requested direction from the Board on whether to prepare a detailed cost breakdown and funding options for a future meeting.

Supervisor Roen noted that some remaining infrastructure funds in the solid waste budget could be used to address immediate safety needs, particularly at the Sierra City Transfer Station, which was identified as the highest priority location for installing tanks and related improvements. He supported moving forward quickly on that site and suggested further discussion regarding the other locations.

Supervisor Adams emphasized the importance of both short and long-term planning for green waste management and expressed appreciation for the work of the Solid Waste Task Force. Regarding potential burning at the Sierra City Transfer Station, He stated that operations should only proceed with explicit approval from both the Forest Service and the Sierra City Fire Department, regardless of weather conditions. He supported moving forward with the proposed safety improvements for Sierra City and noted that the estimated \$8,000 cost is reasonable and might be absorbed within the existing solid waste budget. He acknowledged that consolidating from five transfer sites to three may eventually be necessary due to financial constraints, despite the inconvenience to some communities. The key priority identified was ensuring agency buy-in before any burning occurs.

Vice-Chair Dryden noted that green waste challenges are not unique to Sierra County and that all counties statewide are struggling with increased volumes due to successful firesafe and home hardening efforts. The County wants to continue encouraging defensible space work but cannot sustain current disposal practices with existing funding. Long-term solutions may require collaboration with Plumas County, including the possibility of a shared green waste facility. She emphasized that identifying a sustainable, future focused approach is one of the County's most pressing issues, especially given the surrounding wildfire prone forests.

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Supervisor Adams suggested that one alternative to address long-term green waste costs is to present the issue directly to ratepayers, noting that expanded services or new disposal options will require additional funding. If the public is willing to absorb higher solid waste fees, the County could pursue more sustainable solutions; otherwise, current limitations will remain.

Vice-Chair Dryden commented that even if solid waste rates were increased, the County would still face the challenge of managing the growing volume of green waste. Higher fees alone would not resolve the underlying operational costs, which include equipment, labor, and processing.

Supervisor Roen reported that the Fire Safe Council is committed to assisting the Solid Waste Committee with removing accumulated green waste from the Sierra City Transfer Station. The Council plans to reinstate its trailer program in the spring and now has a contractor in place to support hauling efforts on the east side. They are willing to collaborate with the County, but Title III funds cannot be used for capital purchases.

Vice Chair Dryden noted that the Fire Safe Council is an important partner for the County and should continue to be included in green waste planning efforts.

Supervisor Heuer reported on the one challenge raised with the Fire Safe Council's limited capacity to haul trailers due to a lack of available personnel, which has financial implications. It was also reported that illegal dumping is already occurring in the forest near Sierra City.

The Board expressed appreciation to Interim Director Pangman and Mr. Epps for their continued work and efforts in addressing the county's green waste management challenges.

The Interim Director further stated that mitigation measures should be in place before any burning occurs at the Sierra City Transfer Station even though burning continues at other locations. He emphasized that Sierra City presents the greatest risk and should be prioritized. He supported implementing improvements including securing a reliable water source before burning resumes, noting that the County has the equipment and capacity to provide water without relying on tanks.

Mr. Epps reported that each purchase item falls under the \$7,500 threshold and does not require board approval. The total combined cost would be approximately \$8,000.

Supervisor Adams suggested that, by consensus, the Board could allow staff to move forward if there is no objection to proceeding with the purchases as separate items.

Interim Director Pangman stated that the priority is Sierra City and that staff could begin immediately with purchases under the \$7,500 threshold. This would allow the project to be prepared and tested, with a larger proposal for other locations to be brought

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back to the Board at a later date. He noted that Sierra City is the most pressing need and would serve as a good test case. Staff would proceed with ordering the necessary items and evaluate how the approach works.

By consensus, the Board directed the Interim Director to move forward with the necessary purchases for the Sierra City Transfer Site and to bring back a formal proposal for dealing with green waste at other sites.

- 11.B. Authorization to advertise and hire two (2) vacant Road Maintenance Worker positions in accordance with County personnel policies and procedures.

The Interim Director of Public Works stated that the item was essentially to ratify prior verbal direction from the Board. Due to the current hiring freeze, he sought clarification that the department is authorized to proceed with actions already taken. Specifically, advertising and extending job offers to fill vacant Road Worker positions. He emphasized that staffing levels on the west side are critically low and on the need to move forward with recruitment.

The Board moved to authorize the advertising and to fill the vacant two (2) vacant Road Maintenance Worker positions in accordance with County personnel policies and procedures.

APPROVED. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 4/0/1 (Supervisor Roen ABSENT)

URGENCY ITEM

- 11.D. Authorization to hire two (2) Road Maintenance Workers at Level I, Step E immediately; with permission to promote both positions to a Level III, Step A upon successfully securing their Class A Driver's License.

The Interim Director of Public Works reported that six applicants were interviewed the previous week, and two highly qualified candidates were identified for hire. Both possess substantial experience and live within an hour of the job site. Although their backgrounds align with the Road Worker III classification, that level requires a Class A driver's license, which neither applicant currently holds. One license has lapsed and is being renewed, and the other candidate is in the process of obtaining one. Because they do not yet meet the Class A requirement, the County can only offer the positions at the Road Worker I level. However, the Interim Director noted that the standard Step A-C hiring range would not be competitive given their experience. He requested authorization to offer both candidates Road Worker I, Step E, with the commitment that they will be promoted to Road Worker III, Step A upon obtaining their Class A licenses.

Supervisor Adams noted that the County has been fortunate to avoid snowfall on the Ridge, especially with Mr. Cusato's departure leaving only one employee assigned to

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that area. He stated that offering the candidates Road Worker I, Step E, would be a temporary measure but necessary to allow them to accept the positions. He added that, given their experience, promoting them to Road Worker III, Step A once they obtain their Class A licenses is reasonable, and that the Director's proposal to advance them no higher than Step C reflects a careful and measured approach.

The Personnel Director requested authorization to include in the offer letters that, upon obtaining their Class A driver's licenses, the selected applicants will be promoted to Road Worker III at the Board approved step. She explained that documenting this commitment upfront would prevent delays in their advancement and provide clarity for the applicants.

The Board moved to authorize to hire two (2) Road Maintenance Workers at Level I, Step E immediately; with permission to promote both positions to a Level III, Step A upon successfully securing their Class A Driver's License.

APPROVED. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 4/0/1 (Supervisor Roen ABSENT)

- 11.C. Resolution authorizing the Auditor to make certain changes to the 2025-2026 Final Budget for the purchase of a PC306 Cold Planer for the Road Department in an amount not to exceed \$26,505.27. (4/5th affirmative vote required)

The Interim Director of Public Works stated that the proposed equipment purchase would be highly valuable to the road crew and would significantly reduce their workload. He noted that the equipment is long overdue and will improve the County's ability to complete future projects. Funding is available from remaining FEMA project funds, and the purchase totaling \$26,505.21 would not impact the General Fund. He explained that the crew has been relying on crack sealing methods, which are no longer effective as roadway cracks have widened, and that acquiring a cold planer will allow for more durable patching and improved road maintenance going forward.

Supervisor Adams asked whether the equipment purchase had been under consideration for some time, noting that with interim leadership in place, he wanted to avoid approving a purchase that a future director might later question. He stated he would be comfortable moving forward if this need had been previously identified and affirmed.

In response to Supervisor Adams' inquiry, Interim Director Pangman confirmed that the equipment purchase had been under consideration for a significant period of time.

The Board moved to adopt the resolution authorizing the Auditor to make certain changes to the 2025-2026 Final Budget for the purchase of a PC306 Cold Planer for the Road Department in an amount not to exceed \$26,505.27.

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ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-016. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 4/0/1 (Supervisor Roen ABSENT)

12. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

12.A. Resolution adopting residency requirements for specified positions. (CLERK OF THE BOARD)

Supervisor Adams commented that the County has long operated under a 30-minute response time, but current housing realities make that increasingly difficult to achieve. He stated that the proposed adjustment remains reasonable, still ensures timely response, and reflects the practical challenges facing the County. He noted that Sierra County is not alone, as jurisdictions statewide are experiencing similar issues. Allowing employees on the east side to reside in the Reno area, and those on the west side to live in the greater Grass Valley area, provides a realistic path to maintaining staffing levels.

Supervisor Dryden inquired about residency requirements for Sheriff Department staff.

The Personnel Director clarified that the positions no longer listed under the residency requirement policy are Correctional Officers and Dispatchers, as their residency provisions are now governed by their respective MOUs. Deputy Sheriffs, however, remain subject to the policy.

Director Behlke noted that the policy update now includes appointed Department Managers in the residency requirement, ensuring a responsible manager is in the County and available to respond during emergencies.

Supervisor Adams inquired if the Undersheriff falls under the same residency requirements.

In response, County Counsel confirmed that the policy does include the Undersheriff.

The Board moved to adopt the resolution adopting residency requirements for specified positions.

ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-017. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 4/0/1 (Supervisor Roen ABSENT)

12.B. Introduction and waive first reading of an ordinance repealing section 3.07.070 of the Sierra County Code relating to residency requirements for specified positions. (CLERK OF THE BOARD)

The Board moved to waive the first reading to repeal ordinance section 3.07.070 of the Sierra County Code relating to residency requirements for specified positions.

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APPROVED. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 4/0/1 (Supervisor Roen ABSENT)

12.C. Resolution setting compensation for Grand Jurors. (CLERK OF THE BOARD)

Vice-Chair Dryden reported that the Grand Jury Chair gave a strong presentation explaining the request and challenges of seating a grand jury. The item was returned to approve increasing compensation from \$25 to \$50.

The Board moved to adopt the resolution setting compensation for Grand Jurors.

ADOPTED, Resolution 2026-018. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 4/0/1 (Supervisor Roen ABSENT)

12.D. Introduction and waive first reading of an ordinance repealing section 5.30.015 of the Sierra County Code relating to Grand Jury Compensation. (CLERK OF THE BOARD)

The Board moved to waive the first reading to repeal ordinance section 5.30.015 of the Sierra County Code relating to Grand Jury Compensation.

APPROVED. Motion: Adams/LeBlanc/Unanimous Roll Call Vote: 4/0/1 (Supervisor Roen ABSENT)

13. CLOSED SESSION

13.A. Closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9 (d)(2) - conference with legal counsel - threat of litigation - 1 case.

CLOSED SESSION STATEMENT

The Board met in closed session from 11:06 a.m. to 12:25 p.m. County Counsel reported that direction was given to staff on the one closed session item.

ADJOURN

At 12:26 p.m., with no further business, Vice-Chair Dryden adjourned the meeting.

SHARON DRYDEN, VICE-CHAIR
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST:

MELISSA KINNEER
ASSISTANT CLERK OF THE BOARD