



State of Nevada  
**MERIT AWARD BOARD**



“Good Government, Great Employees”

209 E. Musser Street, Room 101  
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4204

**Joe Lombardo**  
*Governor*



**MERIT AWARD BOARD**  
**SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 – 9:00 AM**

**Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records 100**  
**North Stewart Street, Room 110**  
**Carson City, NV 89701 and**

**Eureka Building**  
**7251 Amigo Street, Room 120 Las**  
**Vegas, NV 89101**

**MINUTES**  
**Merit Award Board**

**Members Present:**

Shayne Powell, Governor’s Finance Office, CHAIR  
Tracey Cook, Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 4041  
Carrie Hughes, DHRM  
Brian Miller, Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 4041

**Members Absent:**

None

**AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order, Roll Call**

Carrie Hughes called the meeting to order. All members were present in order to conduct the business of the Board.

**2. Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

### **3. Discussion and Election of Chair**

Carrie Hughes indicated that the Deputy Attorney General for DHRM has recommended electing a chair and while historically the Chair has been the Governor's representative, this is not outlined in statute and currently the Governor's representative seat is vacant.

Brian Miller asked about the process to elect a chair.

Carrie Hughes indicated that the Board can suggest a Chair or someone can volunteer for the position.

Tracey Cook asked what the position entails.

Carrie Hughes explained that the main responsibilities of the Chair are to run the meetings and to occasionally consult with the secretary outside of meetings regarding decisions that might need to be made, but that in the case of the Merit Award Board, the primary responsibility will be running the meetings.

Shayne Powell volunteered to Chair the Board.

Carrie Hughes moved to approve Shayne Powell as Chair of the MAB. Brian Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **4. Discussion and Election of Secretary**

Chair Powell indicated the next agenda item was discussion and election of a secretary.

Brian Miller asked what is involved in the position of secretary.

Carrie Hughes explained that the secretary, by statute, has to either be the Governor's Office of Finance representative or DHRM's representative. Ms. Hughes volunteered for the position.

Chair Powell informed the Board that this falls under NRS 285.030 and NRS 285.060

Chair Powell called for a motion to approve Carrie Hughes as Board secretary. Brian Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **5. Tabled Suggestions from August 17, 2022**

#### **A. Guy Puglisi**

Carrie Hughes informed the Board that the DHRM representative stated that Mr. Puglisi's suggestion was the state should standardize certain supply items to reduce costs statewide instead of relying on each individual person who has access to order supplies to shop around for the lowest cost. Mr. Puglisi discussed paper ordering, and when the cost of copy paper increased in the format that his office was purchasing he located the same paper packaged in 2500 sheet boxes instead of 500 sheet reams in cases of 10 noting that if it were purchased agency wide, it would realize a 54-percent savings for Agency 407, welfare, with an annual savings of \$70,000. Ms. Hughes explained that the suggestion was intended for statewide consideration, but because DWSS has already adopted the

suggestion, it was agreed in correspondence with the Deputy Attorney General that Mr. Puglisi would not be eligible per NRS 285.030 but may be eligible to the extent that requirements of NRS 285.050 and NRS 285.060 are met for his suggested submission that affected other agencies. Ms. Hughes explained that NRS 285 does not rule out the possibility of an award simply because an employee's suggestion has already been adopted by another agency. This suggestion was also submitted to State Purchasing and their response was that the suggestion was sound and represented the way that State Purchasing had been moving in for the past several years. With the adoption of Nevada EPRO, with the completion of February 2020. It seems that the suggestion was already being implemented prior to the employee's suggestion. The item was tabled to get additional information from other agencies that might adopt this.

Ms. Hughes informed the Board that typically DHRM performs like a secretary and does the contacting of the various agencies, and that she did check with the previous representative, Rachel Baker, and checked the records prior to today's meeting and noted that this was not conducted at no inquiry was made to other agencies.

Brian Miller questioned if the reason for possibly not giving this award is because another agency adopted this policy and confirmed that this does not necessarily write him out for receiving an award.

Carrie Hughes explained that his own division had already adopted it, and it was part of his duties. The DHRM representative then reached out to and State Purchasing confirmed that they had already moved in this direction statewide.

Brian Miller asked about the timeline for his idea submission versus the implementation of the process within the purchasing department.

Chair Powell explained that the recommendation is almost six years old, since which time EPro has been implemented independently of his suggestions. As such, the Chair noted his uncertainty as to how best proceed given that Mr. Puglisi's suggestion does predate that system but no action was taken.

Carrie Hughes indicated that Mr. Puglisi submitted his suggestion in December 2018, and that State Purchasing responded January 30, 2019 by saying that they had been moving in this direction for the past several years.

Tracey Cook asked what agency did the trial of moving in this direction and if there is evidence of this movement.

Brian Miller concurred that validation beyond the agency's say-so would be good to have.

Tracey Cook requested that the Board go back to State Purchasing to ask with what department this process was implemented to show that this was in process prior to Mr. Puglisi's suggestion.

Brian Miller moved to table the item until the Board receives further evidence from purchasing. Tracey Cook seconded. Motion carried.

## **6. Employee Suggestions**

### **A. Griffin-Burke-Ruhl**

Chair Powell discussed Griffin Burke-Ruhl's suggestion of changing envelopes to adhesive strips or other means of sealing. The Chair indicated that the agency response was to reject the suggestion because it fails to provide a cost savings benefit or savings.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

B. Elaine Destin

Chair Powell indicated that Ms. Destin suggested increasing the cost of a moving permit from \$2 to \$5, which will make the state a profit of \$3. The Chair explained that the agency response is to reject this based on NAC 482.906, noting that this suggestion would require a regulation change. The Chair indicated that the agency further contended that people using these permits are likely in a situation where the additional \$3 would be a hardship.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

C. Elaine Destin

Chair Powell noted that this item is regarding a coin shortage and proposes increased costs from a quarter dollar to a full dollar amount, noting that this will increase revenue and eliminate coin problems. The Chair noted that the agency indicated that a NRS statute dictates the amount the DMV may charge and not only would this require a statute change, but also that there is not a coin shortage as the majority of transactions are paid electronically.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

D. Beau Barnett

Chair Powell explained that Beau Barnett suggested raising the competitive bid process requirement threshold over 100,000 to a higher amount, allowing smaller projects not to require compliance with the prevailing wage requirements. The Chair indicated that the agency has rejected this process, specifically stating prevailing wages being in statute and thus requiring a statute change.

Carrie Hughes added that there is a federal law that impacts this as well, the Davis Bacon Act, and as such, this is not merely a state issue.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

E. David Steele

Chair Powell informed the Board of David Steele's suggestion that Nevada work hours change to four nine-hour shifts, or 36-hour weeks, which would save money on personnel. The Chair indicated that the DMV states the suggestion has a statewide policy and legislative implications and as such, deferred the request to DHRM. The Chair explained that DHRM indicated that pursuant to NRS 281.110, the offices of all state officers, Boards, Commissions, and agencies must maintain not

less than a 40-hour week, thus making Mr. Steele's suggestion not permissible under current law.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

#### F. Juliann Koch

Chair Powell discussed Juliann Koch's suggested to remove paper applications for benefits in favor of online applications, noting the suggestion to improve this by printing laminated weatherproof decal QR codes to access Nevada websites be placed on exterior windows or drop boxes. The Chair explained that DWS's response is that they already offer the ability for customers to apply online, and that this would not provide any quantifiable cost savings.

Carrie Hughes added that there are those who do not have internet access and as such, would need to have paper ability.

Chair Powell concurred, adding that there should be more ways to submit a claim for benefits, not less.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

#### G. Triny Green

Chair Powell discussed Triny Green's suggestion to reduce the usage of paper and paperweights, noting that all the applications for driver's licenses and IDs are currently paper applications and by converting this process to electronic, there is a potential of saving 10 sheets per customer, serving hundreds of customers a day. The Chair indicated the DMV's response that this is already in process. In addition, the Chair discussed NRS Chapter 43, which dictates requirements for a customer's applying for a driver's license, instruction permit, ID card, or driver authorization cards and the DMV's validation of these documents. Additionally, the DMV has the ability for people to renew their licenses online. In addition, the Chair explained that to put touchscreens in place, the DMV would actually be spending money to implement something to try to save money.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

#### H. Diana Marchetti

Chair Powell discussed Ms. Marchetti's suggestion for recertification and redetermination of documents, noting that applications are constantly reprinted due to lost paperwork, customers moving, or simply not having the paperwork prepared when arriving. The Chair explained that Ms. Marchetti believes that these applications should not be mailed but that rather people should be sent a small postcard or a text message to renew benefits. Chair Powell explained that DWSS's response is that this idea is not allowable per federal law.

Tracey Cook noted her support for this suggestion of either a postcard or a text message rather than the sending of an entire packet of paper.

Chair Powell noted the privacy issues around sending a postcard, indicating that the postcard would automatically identify a person as receiving benefits, which may have a negative connotation to it

and make individuals vulnerable.

Carrie Hughes raised the federal requirements around this issues, noting that it is governed under federal rules that outline exactly what needs to be sent out to individuals, and that this would not fit on a postcard. Carrie Hughes did note her support for the idea itself, but explained that if the federal regulations are not met, the state will lose money.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

#### I. Daniela Fernandez

Chair Powell discussed Daniela Fernandez's suggestion regarding work from home versus sick time use, noting that office productivity could be maintained were people allowed to work from home, benefiting the agency and saving thousands of dollars in overtime due to backlogs. The Chair explained that the response from DWSS is that NAC 284.554 defines sick leave as being incapacitated due to medical condition or receiving medical or dental services, as well as the fact that this is part of the governor's prerogative. As such, the Chair indicated his belief that the Board could not really do anything about this suggestion as the rules governing it are rather cut and dry.

Tracey Cook questioned why Ms. Fernandez was not aware of the Division's existing telecommuting policy that allows employees to work from home.

Chair Powell reminded the Board that upon Governor Lombardo taking office, he eliminated that policy and as such, this could be simply an issue of timing.

Brian Miller that in order to approve this suggestion, the definition of sick leave would need to be redefined in legislature.

Carrie Hughes explained that DHRM is responsible for that section of regulations and although the Board can propose a change, the Board cannot unilaterally change it. Moreover, Ms. Hughes explained that if someone is on sick leave, they cannot be working and thus, anyone on sick leave is getting paid for not working, whereas working from home is just working in a different location and would not require leave time.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

#### J. Yehonathan Rubinstein

Chair Powell indicated that Yehonathan Rubenstein suggestion the creation of a partnership with the driving school as a supportive service directly with the DMV so that payments of funds would stay within the state to assist those that do not have a driver's license to be able to drive. The Chair indicated Mr. Rubenstein's belief that this would expand on opportunities that are available for NEON participants to help them move closer to self-sufficiency. He believes the suggestion will increase productivity, improve service and reduce costs. The Chair explained that DWSS rejected the suggestion, noting that it will actually increase fiscal costs and transfer costs to the DMV. In addition, Chair Powell indicated DWSS currently provides vocational training opportunities for program participants to assist the participants in obtaining the skills and qualifications reducing their need for public assistance and the DMV follows NRS regulations regarding outside vendors for

driving school but does not provide the service itself. The Chair explained the DMV's position that implementing the suggestion would have unknown costs to the DMV for staffing and would require changes in existing legislation and policy.

The Chair and Brian Miller questioned what the acronym NEON means.

Shayne Powell explained that NEON, New Employees of Nevada, is a program that provides employment and training services to recipients of Temporary Assistance for Family Needs, TANF.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

#### K. Patricia Simpson

Chair Powell discussed Ms. Simpson's suggestion that DWSS eliminate the need for eligibility staff to process SSI-approved clients living in Nevada for annual redeterminations for Medicaid, and eliminate the need to process new SSI applications for Medicaid as well. The Chair indicated DWSS's position that they would not benefit from eliminating the need to process annual eligibility return redeterminations, and their inability to automate the intake process due to the trickle-down programs in Nevada. The Chair further discussed the fact that current federal regulations and DWSS policy prohibit this as all factors of Medicaid eligibility must be evaluated, intake redetermination, and with all reports of changes. The Chair indicated his understanding that there are federal requirements, but opined that this seems like it would be a helpful process.

Tracey Cook added that if the system is automated, clients could be denied due to policies with Medicaid eligibility and/or SSI eligibility.

Chair Powell agreed and opined that it was not approved, then some eyes should go on it, but indicated his belief that there should be a way to streamline the process for easier claims.

Carrie Hughes reiterated the fact that there are federal regulations involved.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

#### L. Jamie Massaro

Chair Powell discussed Jamie Massaro's request for changing asset tags to reduce employee hours spent on inventory, noting that current asset tags only have numbers, are inventoried numerically physically by person, and entered manually and/or marked off on an inventory list. The Chair explained that the suggestion is to order asset tags that have numbers and barcodes to make it easier to inventory items by scanning them, requiring the purchase of scanners. The Chair explained that the state is in the process of updating their data system, Advantage, which may include scanning as part of the new capabilities. The Chair further noted that purchasing that it is not feasible for one department to have a separate inventory system.

Brian Miller questioned if they would be able to implement QR across, and if it was across the board, would it also be in regards to NSHE.

Chair Powell explained that it is limited to the executive branch only.

Carrie Hughes confirmed that NSHE would be outside of the Advantage rollout as NSHE operates their own systems.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

M. Matthew Laruccia

Chair Powell explained that Mr. Laruccia suggested a different printer process than what is currently in place. SNAMHS uses over 200 printers, 51 types with different ink cartridges. The Chair noted that because printers are leased, this decision making is outside of the agency's purview.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

N. Natalia Garzoli

Chair Powell noted that this suggestion was almost identical to the one that was presented earlier. As part of the statute the suggestion must be novel. The idea has already been proposed.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

O. Danial Jacobs

The Chair discussed Danial Jacobs's suggestion for sellable handheld phones for inmates, but noted that Operating Procedure 718 addresses inmate personal phone calls, but does not provide the information on how the institution gets phones.

Tracey Cook noted that calls in NDOC are recorded, whereas the Amazon phones in question are not necessarily set up to record calls and as such, she would reject this suggestion.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

P. Dawnelle Roberts

Chair Powell discussed Dawnelle Roberts' request to save money on postage and envelopes in DWSS. When a decision is made on a case and the client is not present the notice of decision generates overnight and is mailed out the next business day from the mail room to the central office. The employee estimates a potential savings of \$137,500 per year in stamps. The Chair explained that DWSS rejected this suggestion based on the fact that notices run through an automated process in bulk and the state pays a bulk rate on postage costs.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.



Q. Alice Haluck

Chair Powell indicated that Item Q is regarding TANF and NEON pre-eligibility orientation, noting that due to COVID, the requirement class is being discontinued. The Chair explained that Ms. Haluck suggests the need to provide an online video followed by a 10-quiz to explain eligibility to applicants. The Chair indicated that DWSS has rejected this suggestion based on the fact that they would not benefit from a change in TANF NEON orientation as the current procedures are sufficient and follow policy, to implement this suggestion would create unnecessary barriers to program benefits, and that no savings would be gained by the state.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

R. Tashen Covington

The Chair explained Tashen Covington's suggestion of a specialized unit for workers who still qualify for benefits on a specialized schedule to ensure that state employees are able to complete interviews, update information, and provide documentation without needing to take time off, as well as a phone line customized for state employees to discreetly report having a case and conducting the business of their case without having to tell anyone. The Chair indicated that DWSS rejected this on the basis that the agency would not benefit from the creation of a specialized unit for Division employees who are program participants as the current policy is equitable and effective, and the suggestion would violate policy as well as provide no increases in cost savings, service, or productivity.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

S. Lorie Massaro

The Chair indicated that this suggestion is the same as Item Number L, the asset tags being replaced with a barcode scanner.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

T. Christie Howard

Chair Powell explained that Christie Howard's suggestion relates to the Wraparound In Nevada program, where individuals with therapeutic or behavior science backgrounds should be working hands on with families of WIN based on the belief that it would help eliminate additional provider that keeps said services within WIN itself. This could help expand the program and help families save money by having the facilitator be the therapist. The Chair indicated that DCFS rejected this suggestion as it reduces the quality of services provided, and when this suggestion was implemented in other states, it was not successful with less families served, role confusion for both the licensed professionals and the families, and meaningful data collection being extremely difficult to achieve. Brian Miller indicated his curiosity in knowing more about what states found this unsuccessful.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

U. Rochelle Altares McKenna

Chair Powell indicated Ms. McKenna's suggestion to remove one of the two administrative assistant positions to save the state \$25,000 or more annually. The Administrative Assistant 3 supervises the Administrative Assistant 2 and they both support the office. There is no reason to review eliminating one of these positions at this time.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

V. Cindy Kaneshiro

The Chair explained Cindy Kaneshiro's suggestion regarding the FSS help desk to assist field analysts with general questions that may be analyzed by experienced works on different programs. DWSS rejected this suggestion based on the fact that the existing operations help desk is sufficient and that after some research into an FSS help desk, DWSS would not benefit from the creation of one and a change in agency training procedures. In addition, the Chair noted that there was no cost savings to the state to be gained from this suggestion.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

W. Tim Lindley

Chair Powell discussed Tim Lindley's suggestion to utilize the federal to state information sharing of Form 1099K with an analysis based on prior auto reviews to conduct reasonable estimates of unreported taxable sales permitted under NRS 360.300 for collection actions and revenue. The Chair indicated that the agency was pleased that Mr. Lindley was such a forward thinker, but because of an audit in June of 2018, the agency had already begun developing their own system to replace this form 1099K.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

X. Tim Lindley

Chair Powell indicated that Item X is an ancillary or adjunct request to Item W and adds the idea of creating a database to maintain all the 1099K data. The Chair noted that there is currently a modernization project underway being implemented by Department of Taxation called Mint that will satisfy a number of these suggestions.

Brian Miller asked if there was any indication of cost savings.

The Chair indicated that it appeared that it would be less cost savings rather than revenue increases.

Carrie Hughes noted that the table provided by Mr. Lindley does not demonstrate an offset between cost and increased revenues.

Brian Miller also noted the cost of a database, and commended Mr. Lindley for his forward thinking, but indicated the need for sufficient evidence to back up his ideas.

Chair Powell reminded the Board that Taxation has already rejected this suggestion.

A motion was made and seconded to reject the suggestion. Motion carried.

Y. Corina Thorne

Chair Powell discussed Corina Thorne's suggestion regarding saving paper and ink, noting the amount of time involved in the current process. The Chair explained that the employee developed a system in which the stamp is scanned individually and added into each page, eliminating the need to print and saving time. The Chair noted that the word "rejected" was crossed out on his notes.

Carrie Hughes confirmed that she had crossed out rejected because the department is conflicted in the documentation.

Chair Powell noted that ADSD has reviewed the merit award suggestion from Corina Thorne for any cost savings that could be identified, that the process that was in place at the time has been completely removed, and the new data system on board has replaced the process. The Chair further noted the discussion in the paperwork about her being ineligible for the award as it is part of her job duties to come up with new ideas. The Chair suggested tabling this item until more information was received. The Chair asked Secretary Hughes to get clarification on this backup, whether it was a yes or a no, and if a yes, what makes this person ineligible.

Brian Miller added the need to find out if when submitted, this was currently part of the employee's assigned duties.

A motion was made and seconded to table this item until more information was received. Motion carried.

## **7. Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be October 23, 2024, followed by one on November 14, 2024.

Tracey Cook asked about the potential of another location than the one that she currently attends the meetings in.

Carrie Hughes noted that the location must be a place where the public can attend due to Open Meeting Law. Ms. Hughes indicated that she would talk to DHRM's DAG regarding a more convenient location for Ms. Cook.

## **8. Board Comments**

Carrie Hughes informed the Board of the directive from the Governor's Office that all Boards, Commissions, and Committees have a language access plan. Ms. Hughes indicated that DHRM has already done one for itself and has offered to allow the Board to use theirs with just some changes in key language. Ms. Hughes said she is waiting to find out more information and is merely informing the Board that this will be a future agenda item coming before the Board for action.

**9. Public Comment:**

There was no public comments.

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.