



ELKO TELEVISION DISTRICT

PO BOX 456 ELKO, NEVADA 89803

Serving our community through reliable communication

Board Meeting Minutes

October 13th, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Elko County Courthouse

Board Members:

Present: Dale Lotspeich, Kent LeBarts, Brian Riley, Raymond Mowrey, and Misty Atkins

Absent:

Others Present:, Ashley Perkins, Jim Winer, Angie Smith, Gavin Stanley, Linkin Greer, Justice Whiteman, Joseph Mpiga-Tsiba, Thomas Kincaid, Katherine Squires, Takura Fowle, Killins Harlan, Alyssa Lyr, Emmarae Goohdour, Perla, Drake Ritz, and Susie Palm Vega representing Elko Institute for Academic Achievement (EIAA) Charter School, Rex Steninger representing the Elko County Commissioners, Brandolyn Thran representing Nevada Classical Academy Elko (NCAE) Charter School, Clayton Anderson representing Elko County School District (ECSD), Mike Murphy representing Diversified Consulting Services, Cenni Jimenez representing Premier Wireless Services, Paden Hilyard representing Eagle Communications, Shelly Nee representing Shelly Nee Media, Lori Gilbert representing Elko Broadcasting Company, Pedro G Ormaza representing himself, Leslie Lotspeich representing herself, Charles Schaer representing himself, and Ken Wiley and Marisa Reeves as employees of Elko Television District

Proceedings

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Dale Lotspeich

Public Comment: None

Comments From the Chairman

Nothing to report.

Approval of the Minutes - September 8th, 2026 Meeting

Kent LeBarts moved to accept the minutes from the September 8th, 2026 meeting. Brian Riley seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Approve Treasurer's Report

Kent LeBarts moved to accept the Treasurer's report as written. Brian Riley seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Approval & Ratification of Outstanding Bills for Payment

Kent LeBarts read aloud the outstanding and ratified bills. Brian Riley moved to accept the outstanding and ratified bills as read. Raymond Mowrey seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

On-Call Engineering Report – DCS, Mike Murphy

Mike provided updates on the Grindstone, Peavey, and Ruby Vista sites.

Grindstone: The plot plan has been completed to support infrastructure planning. The access road has also been completed, including repairs to prior damage. NNE located the existing underground power line to confirm its location. Concrete foundations for the new buildings are complete, and ice shields have been installed. Work is ongoing on cable racks to protect the cables. New power conduits have been installed, and a trench has been excavated for the gas line. Verizon is expected to add a 20-foot extension to the new tower.

Peavey: A recent survey found that the site location identified in the lease did not match the current site location. The original survey was based on existing corners that were later moved. The site has now been re-surveyed, and the location is expected to be accurate. A fire occurred at Peavey. The BLM will fund repairs to the roads.

Ruby Vista Building: Mike has completed the plot plan and infrastructure plan. The electrical permit has been approved. Because the building is below the level of the city sewer line, a sewer lift will need to be installed. The building has not previously had water or sewer service.

Presentations By Charter Schools Requesting Ad Valorem Funding

Elko County Commissioner Rex Steninger explained that the County had initially requested a one-cent contribution. Voters had rejected a 75-cent “Pay as You Go” proposal. The County later retained 50 cents and returned nearly half of that amount to the school districts. The TV District humped in and got five cents. The Commission had hoped the Board would consider contributing one cent, but Mr. Steninger said the request had become complicated and that other options might be available. Mr. Steninger stated that the Commission was withdrawing its request for the one-cent contribution at this time. He asked the Board to hear the presentation and remain open to future discussion, noting the Commission might revisit the request later. He also observed that taking one cent from the school district would reduce the amount available for students.

Ashley Perkins of EIAA introduced Brandolyn Thon of NACE, the new charter school, and students from the school’s career club. Teacher Suzie Palm explained that students interview community members using prepared questions. The presenters clarified that the charter schools are public schools, though their funding differs from that of the Elko County School District. They teach Nevada Content Standards and develop their curriculum from those standards. EIAA currently serves students in kindergarten through eighth grade, and NCAE serves kindergarten through fourth grade. Enrollment was reported as 396, consistent with the charter’s approved enrollment.

Gavin, an EIAA student, described taking advanced classes and progressing through the curriculum at an accelerated pace. He also spoke about visiting the University of California, Berkeley, to learn about pursuing a career in medicine and noted that students have started several clubs. Tao, an eighth-grade student who has attended EIAA for two years, said he feels comfortable expressing himself at school and that the school addresses concerns promptly. He described supportive teachers, improved academic scores, and opportunities to participate in sports. Killins Harlan, a seventh-grade student, spoke about the friendships and supportive community she has found at EIAA. She described receiving patient help with reading and said the school has helped her grow academically and become more confident.

Ms. Perkins explained that charter schools must meet academic, financial, and operational performance requirements and may face closure if they fail to do so. She said EIAA faced possible closure in 2018 while its elementary program struggled. The pandemic provided an opportunity to make changes. Charter schools must submit extensive reporting and renew their charters periodically. EIAA recently renewed its charter for seven years; NCAE currently has a six-year charter. Ms. Perkins reported that EIAA currently holds a five-star academic rating. She also described funding differences: charter schools do not receive the same special education salary incentive or food service allocation as ECSD, and they do not have access to local property tax revenue for major building and equipment costs. She said the schools' funding gap is primarily in capital needs rather than day-to-day operations. EIAA and NCAE Charter schools will not receive funding under the Governor's emergency bill because it is intended to offset enrollment declines, which the schools did not experience. They said additional funding would support capital needs, such as replacing rooftop HVAC units, without requiring staff reductions. The schools have partnered with the County and City on their new facility. Ms. Perkins emphasized that the charter schools are not intended to compete with the ECSD, but to provide value and help students gain skills for future success.

In response to Brian's question about fundraising, Ms. Perkins said the schools hold numerous fundraisers and receive support from local mines. Rex Stinenger added that opening the new charter school required raising nearly \$1 million and securing a building.

Dale reported that the TV District had received a license to launch a low-power television station and was considering a student-led operating model. Ms. Perkins and Ms. Thran expressed interest in participating. Ms. Palm also expressed interest in the partnership and noted her journalism background. She reported that the school currently has a waitlist of approximately 800 students.

In response to questions about the admissions lottery, Ms. Perkins explained that parents submit each child's name, age, and grade. A computer randomly selects applicants for the list. When a place becomes available, parents have three days to accept or decline before the offer moves to the next applicant. Siblings of current students receive higher priority. Ms. Perkins said the schools do not skip students ahead by grade. Students may advance to more challenging course content while remaining with their age peers, and schools also consider their maturity.

Charles Schaer asked how the Commission would ensure that the proposed one-cent contribution went to the charter schools rather than the ECSD. Mr. Steninger said the Commission would allocate the funds to charter schools based on enrollment and could not redirect them to the ECSD. Ms. Perkins added that the TV District would retain oversight and approval authority over fund use, including ensuring expenditures support capital projects and are responsible uses of taxpayer funds.

Presentation by Ken Wiley Regarding the Impacts of Decreasing Ad Valorem by One Penny

Ken presented information on the request to retain one cent of Ad Valorem revenue, estimated at approximately \$187,000. He said the revenue supports current operations and that the District's operating budget could not absorb a reduction of that size. The loss would represent slightly more than 15% of the operating budget. Ken cited NRS 318.230, which addresses determining the revenue needed for district purposes after considering other income, including the costs of operating and maintaining district facilities and equipment, acquiring facilities and equipment, and meeting applicable obligations. Ken said the District's mission has expanded beyond rebroadcasting transmissions from Salt Lake City and Reno. Its work now includes supporting community communications and public safety services.

The District has a memorandum of understanding with the Elko County Fire Protection District. Under the agreement, the District provides access to its mountain-top sites and communications infrastructure to support county operations, including communications routed through Central Dispatch and the 911 center. The arrangement makes use of the District's existing commercial-grade sites in areas with limited public safety communications coverage, reducing the need for the County to build new sites. Ken noted that maintaining these sites is costly, including access roads and power delivery. He cited a \$200,000 road expense at Maggie Creek Ranch. At Grindstone, power is delivered to the ranch and then carried to the site by a line that is approximately 40 to 50 years old. The District expects the line may need replacement within about five years. Ken described Grindstone as a critical site for Elko County and the surrounding area. As part of the MOU, the District budgeted \$165,000 for a full-time communications technician. The position would be funded by the District and employed by Elko County. The District also budgeted \$50,000 for tools and equipment to support installation and maintenance work.

The District hired Shelly Nee Media to help develop local programming and recently received an FCC license for a station. The District budgeted \$40,000 for the effort this year. Ms. Nee has been working with the Elko County School District and Great Basin College. The District plans to provide a main channel and subchannels, with programming that may include local weather, NDOT traffic cameras, and other community information. Ken said the initiative is intended to make the District's services more locally focused. Ken also offered to explore a communications and electronics learning program for students interested in the field.

The District recently purchased \$128,000 in equipment, plus installation costs. The equipment includes an Emergency Alert System (EAS), which will allow emergency services to interrupt regular programming and broadcast urgent messages. Ken said the District has not had this capability before and is working with emergency services and NOAA to support its implementation. The District has also worked with the University of Nevada, Reno, on seismology and has installed fire cameras at several mountain-top sites. Two cameras were recently installed at Grindstone, with others located at Lamoille and Peavey. Elko County Fire Protection District, state agencies, and federal agencies can access the cameras. The system uses AI to identify possible smoke and fires. Ken said the District does not charge for the rack space or power used by the cameras.

Dale asked whether the District could realistically support both the communications technician and the low-power television station if it lost between \$150,000 and \$200,000 in Ad Valorem revenue. Ken said it could not. He identified the communications technician and the local programming position as likely first cuts, while noting that cuts would still leave a budget shortfall. He added that eliminating those positions would impede the District's ability to meet its MOU commitments and continue local broadcasting.

Paden raised concerns about long-term maintenance costs for facilities supporting public safety communications. He noted that if an air-conditioning unit at a site fails, replacement may be the only option because the units are no longer supported. Each replacement is estimated to cost approximately \$20,000, plus contractor labor. Replacing all units could cost an estimated \$400,000 to \$600,000. Failure of the units could cause high temperatures that may affect communications equipment.

Discussion and Possible Action as the Fund Charter Schools with Ad Valorem Augmentation

Dale said that funding the charter schools would not align with the TV District's mission or objectives. He expressed concern that giving up one cent of Ad Valorem revenue could limit the District's ability to hire a full-time technician. He noted that contract labor generally costs more and that the District may not have enough work to keep a contractor fully occupied. He also said the reduction could affect the District's ability to establish a low-power television station and meet its commitments under the memorandum of understanding. Dale concluded that contributing the funds would not be the best use of taxpayer revenue and that the TV District should not be responsible for correcting a funding shortfall created by another government entity. Misty agreed with Dale's comments.

Brian said the State approved the charter schools and should fund them, rather than relying on a district with no education mandate. He noted that he often receives questions about where to find local news and said the growing Elko community needs local television. He also emphasized the importance of communications for emergency personnel.

Ray recommended that Rex Steninger explore other funding sources. He said he had joined the Board because of its work with Elko Fire and his concern that communications systems were behind current standards. He said the Board was beginning to address those gaps and should focus on bringing systems up to date for the benefit of the community.

Rex said he recognized the TV District's plans for the revenue. He explained that the request stemmed from the funds connected to the "Pay as You Go" measure. Brian thanked Rex for the presentation and for the time he had invested in preparing it.

At 10:47 am, Dale Lotspeich called for a recess. The Board reconvened at 10:52 am.

Dale noted the board had not taken any action on this agenda item yet. The board could do nothing or vote. The board agreed that since Rex withdrew his request, there would be no action.

Repair Service Report and Site Updates by Communications System Supervisor

Dale noted the service report was in the packet for the board to read. Misty Atkins moved to approve the repair service report Ken prepared. Raymond Mowrey seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Ordering Remote Monitoring Equipment from Technalogix for the Elko Fiber Hut

Ken noted there was a technical detail missing. Tabled until the next meeting.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Hosting "Business After Hours" in Conjunction with the Elko Chamber of Commerce

Megan from the Chamber approached Brian about whether the TV District wants to participate in Business After Hours. It could be done at the Art Club. It includes a whole month of advertising. The cost is \$500. Brian wants to do a presentation about the Elko TV District. The event will be on 4/15/27 at 5:30 pm. The TV District will provide snacks. Raymond Mowrey moved to have the Elko TV District participate in Business After Hours on 4/15/27. Misty Atkins seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Discussion and Possible Action on Premier Wireless and Complete Management Updates on Grindstone and Verizon Lamoille

Ken reported significant progress at Grindstone, though snow is accumulating and may soon prevent site access if conditions continue. Eagle Communications is preparing to pour the propane tank pad. The propane line has been trenched and installed. Once the pad is complete, Suburban Propane can deliver the new tanks. A new generator has been ordered and is expected to arrive in December. The ice canopy over the building is complete; the ice trays still need to be finished. Verizon's 20-foot tower extension is unlikely to proceed this year. Ken reported that the remaining projects are progressing smoothly and that all required permits have been approved.

Discussion and Possible Action on LPTV Licensing and Updates as it Relates to Possible Future Local Broadcast and Content and FCC Status

Ken reported that the District received several broadcast licenses during the past week. The District now has a license for Channel 30 at Lamoille. Peavey, Grindstone, and Lamoille can each carry up to 10 channels. The District received one license for the Adobe site, although five had been requested. Potential interference with Eureka was identified. Eureka TV proposed a letter of understanding stating that, if the District's broadcasts cause interference, the District would reduce power or turn off the affected channel. The District has 36 months to bring the licensed channels into operation. Ken said all sites are ready except Adobe.

Committee Reports

Translator/Programming Committee

Brian reported that the TV Board is sponsoring the Carlin Booster Club and will produce and install two banners. He may approach Elko High School about a similar arrangement. Shelly plans to meet with Dale and Brian next week to discuss a five-year plan for low-power television (LPTV). She noted that Vegas PBS may relinquish a station on West Twin because it serves the Las Vegas area. The station could be transferred to KUNR, which may contact the TV District in the future. The station is licensed at 1,000 watts. Brian said he met with Global One at one of the Business After Hours event. Global One offered the District use of a studio in its building, if needed, and said it could livestream programming across its channels. Ken asked Global One and Elko Broadcasting to announce the dates and times of the Lamoille changeover. He thanked both organizations for their support.

Budget Committee and Infrastructure Committee

Nothing to report.

Old Business: None

New Business: Ray asked whether the Board packet must be posted publicly. Marisa said her review of the Nevada Revised Statutes indicated that posting is not required, but the packet must be made available. Dale recommended confirming the requirement with Pool Pact.

Public Comment: None

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on November 10th, 2026.