

Administrative History

The Nevada Territorial Legislature of 1861 designated the town of Carson City to be the permanent seat of government and also declared that a parcel known as the “Plaza,” bounded by Musser, Fall, Second, and Carson Streets be dedicated to the use of the State for the erection of public buildings (Compiled Laws of Nevada, 1873, Chapter CLXI, 4048, Section 1; 4049, Section 1; and 4050, Section 2). However, the new state initially conducted its business in rented or leased buildings around Carson City, including the Warm Springs Hotel which served as the home of the first Nevada Legislature. During this period, the 1865 Legislature appointed the Nevada Secretary of State as the ex-officio Superintendent of Public Buildings and Property. He took charge of, preserved and kept in proper repair the capitol building and furniture and readied them for legislative sessions. He was also in charge of laying in a supply of fuel and other supplies for the Legislature.

It was not until the 1869 legislative session that funding, planning and construction of a capitol building were authorized. Chapter XXXIII of the 1869 Statutes as approved February 23, 1869 authorized the State Treasurer to set up a State Capitol Fund financed by a special tax, and designated \$100,000 as the amount to be spent on construction of the capitol building. The fund was under the direction and supervision of the Board of Capitol Building Commissioners, consisting of seven members who were private individuals: Frederick Stadtmuller, George T. Davis, John Wagner, A. Klauber, John H. Mills, J.H. Sturtevant, and J.C. Hazlett who would elect a president, vice-president, and secretary.

The Legislature authorized the Commissioners to begin advertising for plans, specifications, and building bids as soon as the State Capitol Fund reached the sum of \$15,000. \$250.00 was allocated for the building plan. The Legislature specified that the walls of the building be of stone quarried at the Nevada State Prison.

The capitol cornerstone was laid on June 9, 1870 and construction was completed in time for the 5th Legislative Session to meet in the building in 1871.

With construction completed, on Feb. 26, 1875 the State Legislature passed “An Act to Provide for the Protection of the State Capitol Building and for the Improvement of the Grounds Surrounding it.” A Board of Capitol Commissioners was created to carry out that mandate,

consisting of the Lieutenant Governor (president), Secretary of State (secretary), and State Controller. The Board focused on soliciting a plan and completing the design for the capitol grounds, painting the capitol interior, making repairs, and constructing privies.

By the 1880s the Board of Capitol Commissioners' responsibilities had increased along with the growth of state government. The Board supervised the capitol building and grounds; the state water works; state printing office; and all other state buildings, grounds, and property. They controlled the expenditures of all appropriations for furnishing, repairing and maintaining state property and for defraying the telegraphic, postal and other expenses of state officers, Supreme Court, and State Library. They were also responsible for hiring and paying porters, watchmen and laborers. The 1887 Legislature officially relieved the Secretary of State of duties imposed by the 1865 session.

The 1899 Legislature made changes to the Board, enlarging membership to include the Governor (chair), Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Controller, and State Treasurer. The Legislature again amended the duties and membership of the Board in 1911. In 1933 the Board of Capitol Commissioners was abolished and its functions were assumed by the newly created State Board of Control. In 1949 the State Department of Buildings and Grounds took over the functions of the Board of Control; in turn it became the Buildings and Grounds Division of the Department of Administration in 1963.

Records of the Capitol Commissioners 1870-1956 2 cubic feet and 8 vols.

The records of the State Capitol Building Commissioners, Board of Capitol Commissioners, and State Board of Control, hereafter referred to as Capitol Commissioners, are reflective of the evolving and growing nature of the business of state government in Nevada. From the creation and supervision of a single building in 1869 to multiple state-owned buildings the Commissioners were responsible for the construction, furnishing, maintenance, and upkeep of those buildings and grounds. In addition to the State Capitol building, other state facilities included the State Printing Plant (1885), the capitol annex that originally housed the State Library (1905), wings on the south and north sides of the capitol (1913), a governor's mansion (1908-1909), a state water plant at Vicee Canyon northwest of Carson City (called Veacey in the records), and state buildings for the State Supreme Court and other offices.

The records of the Capitol Commissioners are divided into the following series: minutes, legal documents, bids and contracts, correspondence, personnel records, reports, bills and claims, and subject files. Within each series the records are arranged chronologically or alphabetically.

An in-house data base is available for more detailed searches.

Minutes 1879; 1885-1956 8 vols. and 3 folders

The minutes of the Board of Capitol Commissioners and the State Capitol Building Commissioners record business conducted by the board pertaining to the design, construction, and maintenance of the Nevada State Capitol building; the Nevada State Library building, 1905; the 1913 addition to the Capitol; the Governor's Mansion, 1908-1909; the capitol water supply; and the capitol grounds. Included are calls for bids, discussions about awarding bids and contracts, purchase of supplies and equipment, hiring of personnel, allocation of office space, reports, and financial information. The minutes are supplemented by the "Bids and Contracts" record series.

The minutes are compiled in bound volumes that are arranged chronologically. There is some overlap between volumes and also some gaps in the written record. The minutes for 1879 consist of loose pages torn from their original volume. That volume is not part of this series. The volumes for 1921-1939 and 1939-1956 were created by the Board of Control who assumed the responsibilities of the Board of Capitol Commissioners in 1933.

1879, June 3 to November	CAPCOMM-0007 Folder 57
1885-1895*	CAPCOMM-0009, Pages 55-134
1899-1907	CAPCOMM-0001
1905-1910	CAPCOMM-0007 Folder 60
1909-1913	CAPCOMM-0007 Folder 61
1911-1923	CAPCOMM-0002
1911-1933 Index to minutes	CAPCOMM-0005
1921-1939**	CAPCOMM-0003
1935, Jan. 17, rough minutes	CAPCOMM-0007 Folder 59
1939-1956**	CAPCOMM-0004
1946, April 16	CAPCOMM-0007 Folder 58
1951-1953	CAPCOMM-0007 Folder 62

*The CAPCOMM-0009 volume also includes minutes of the Board of State Printing Commissioners, 1871-1873 and 1899-1907; pages 1-51 and 136-181.

**The volumes CAPCOMM-0003 and CAPCOMM-0004 include minutes of the State Board of Control.

Bids and Contracts 1870-1947 1 cubic foot CAPCOMM-0006

This series documents the process of building, repairing, improving, expanding, and providing

Reports 1871-1929 7 folders CAPCOMM-0007 #51-56

Included is a report of the Capitol Building Commissioners to the State Legislature regarding the contract to build the Capitol and the cost, report of janitors, biennial report to the Legislature, report of the Clerk of the State Supreme Court regarding the condition of the court records, report of the Public Service Commission on gas consumption of the Capitol, tools purchased for use of ground keepers, and a report on inspection of state buildings and the need for repair and painting. Arranged chronologically.