

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
SIERRA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

TUESDAY

11:00 A.M.

AUGUST 26, 2014

PRESENT:

David Humke, Chairman
Bonnie Weber, Vice Chairperson
Marsha Berkgigler, Commissioner
Vaughn Hartung, Commissioner
Kitty Jung, Commissioner*

Nancy Parent, County Clerk
John Slaughter, County Manager
Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel
Charles Moore, Fire Chief

The Board convened at 11:50 a.m. in regular session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada, and conducted the following business:

14-121F AGENDA ITEM 2

Agenda Subject: “Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to three minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Board of Fire Commissioners agenda. The District will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Board of Fire Commissioners as a whole.”

There was no response to the call for public comment.

***11:52 a.m.** Commissioner Jung arrived.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 3A THROUGH 3B

14-122F AGENDA ITEM 3A

Agenda Subject: “Approval of minutes from Board of Fire Commissioners meetings of June 24 and July 22, 2014.”

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Berkgigler, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 3A be approved.

14-123F AGENDA ITEM 3B

Agenda Subject: “Discussion and possible approval of Memorandum of Understanding between Washoe County Health District, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, North Lake Tahoe Fire protection District; The State of Nevada, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ Divisions of Forestry, State Lands, State Parks & Wildlife; and the US Dept. of the Interior Bureau of Land Management, & Fish and Wildlife Service to implement the Washoe County Smoke Management Program. (All Commission Districts)”

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Berkbigler, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 3B be approved.

14-124F AGENDA ITEM 4A

Agenda Subject: “A) Fire Chief Report – report and discussion related to Fire District operations by Truckee Meadows Fire Chief Charles A. Moore, and B) Monthly Statistics.”

Fire Chief Charles Moore said the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) explained that northern Nevada was suffering from a drought because there was a large high-pressure ridge driving the atmospheric water vapor to the north of northern Nevada, rather than the water vapor coming up from the south. He stated it had not been determined whether or not the pattern was related to global warming, but it was a persistent high-pressure ridge that seemed to affect California the most. He said the good news for northern Nevada was the area had seen a lot more rain and the wildfire experience this summer was rather benign with the number of acres burned being substantially less than in previous years. He stated the fire restrictions would end on September 2nd, which was the earliest that happened in a number of years, and the fire indices were also better than they had been in a number of years. He stated the fire restrictions being lifted meant camp fires would be allowed. He said if the thunderstorm pattern continued, the area would be in good shape for late fall when camp fires were used during hunting and back-country recreation.

Chief Moore noted there were significant calls for service during the month.

There was no action taken or public comment on this item.

14-125F AGENDA ITEM 5

Agenda Subject: “Recommendation to recognize, accept and sign the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) developed by the Estates at Mt. Rose Home Owner’s Association. (All Commission Districts)”

Fire Chief Charles Moore said the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was the first step a community needed to take to make it a full fire-adaptive community. He stated because fire conditions, vegetation, structures, access, and water supplies were different

from community to community, a CWPP encouraged the local communities to take a look at their specific risks and prioritize them, because one size did not fit all in terms of wildfire protection.

Fire Marshal Amy Ray said the Estates at Mt. Rose Home Owner's Association (HOA) was the first community in the District to bring forward a CWPP, which was the community's effort to reduce or eliminate the negative impacts of a wildfire in their area. She said the CWPPs were important, because the people in the community got together and decided what was important for their area, such as vegetation management, or what they felt might be the area's greatest risk. She said once the CWPP was done, the District would provide them with educational and technical information to ensure what they were trying to do would meet the codes. She stated they would also help them in meeting with the U.S. Forest Service and the Nevada Division of Forestry to help them decide what mitigation efforts would work best in the areas they chose to concentrate on. She stated it was a bottom-up scenario with the community making the decisions, rather than the District dictating what they would do.

Thomas Daly, the Estates at Mt. Rose HOA representative, said the Association had been working on their fuel reduction efforts since 2007. He noted the Washoe Drive fire came within one mile of the community in 2012. He stated the adjacent communities were evacuated and the Estates at Mt. Rose would have been next. He thanked Chief Moore and Fire Marshal Ray for helping them put together the CWPP. He said the CWPP would be used to obtain a grant in 2015, which would be used to clear an additional 60 acres of fuel in the community's common areas. He stated the HOA budgeted every year to fund its fuel reduction efforts, so a reserve was built up that would be used to match any potential grant funding. He said the next step would be to achieve the Fire Adapted Community designation.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Chairman Humke thanked Mr. Daly and the HOA for all of their hard work, because their work protected not only their community, but other communities.

On motion by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Commissioner Berkbigler, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be recognized, accepted, and signed.

14-126F AGENDA ITEM 6

Agenda Subject: "Approve the purchase of one (1) new type I structure engine from Pierce Mfg., Inc., 2600 American Drive, Appleton, Wisconsin 54913 in the amount of \$491,295.00 using the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) cooperating purchasing program. (All Commission Districts)"

Fire Chief Charles Moore said this structure engine would go into service at the Sun Valley Fire Station, and was the last structural engine needing to be replaced to modernize the entire structural engine fleet. He said it also standardized the engine fleet so they were all like

models, which was a huge benefit for the firefighters. He congratulated Division Chief Tim Leighton for his skill in negotiating a very good price for the District.

Commissioner Berkgigler said it was wonderful that the engine would be serving Sun Valley. She asked if this engine was included in the District's budget approved earlier this year. Chief Moore confirmed it was.

In response to the call for public comment, Garth Elliot stated he appreciated that Sun Valley would be getting new equipment to help protect its 6,500 houses.

On motion by Commissioner Berkgigler, seconded by Commissioner Weber, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 6 be approved.

14-127F AGENDA ITEM 7

Agenda Subject: "Recommendation to approve an Interlocal Agreement between Washoe County, the Washoe County Health District, the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, the City of Reno and the City of Sparks, to create a Regional Emergency Medical Services Oversight function for the management, measurement and improvement of emergency medical oversight. (All Commission Districts)"

Fire Chief Charles Moore said the Interlocal Agreement had been approved by the other agencies and the District was the last agency that needed to approve it. He felt it was important for this agreement to be approved, because the decisions on service levels could not be made without having data. He stated traffic engineers used data to design highways and data should also be used to design fire and emergency medical services (EMS). He stated that data had been sorely lacking over the years but, due to the hard work of the EMS Working Group and through long and difficult negotiations, the point was reached where we would see this data emerge. He said having the data would allow the Oversight Committee to make decisions regarding areas where there were gaps in the response or where was an over response. He advised the CAD-to-CAD link was also a necessary component, and when that link was put together with the Oversight Committee, he believed improvements would be seen.

Chief Moore said he was disappointed the Agreement did not provide the District with a representative on the Oversight Committee. He noted the District was the largest provider of advanced life support (ALS) services in the County, because there were 11 paramedic-staffed engines that often had two paramedics. He stated he would recommend approval of the Interlocal Agreement even without that representation, but he thought he should voice his concerns. He said going forward he would voice his concerns and provide input to the County Manager, who was on the Committee.

Chief Moore said one of the things needing to be fixed regarding the EMS system was about the District having to go on every emergency-medical call. He stated not every medical call required sending a fire truck, but the system did not exist that indicated what the priority of the call was. He said that meant the District had to send a fire truck, because there was no way of knowing how severe the emergency was. He stated the CAD-to-CAD link would fix

that and the data accumulation over time would help make the decisions of when to send a fire truck and when not to send one.

Chief Moore said one of the biggest challenges facing the District was that of receiving simultaneous calls. He said if someone with a fairly minor emergency was being treated, the engine would be committed to being at that location for a while. He stated another call coming in for that same engine's service area was a concern, which was beginning to happen more often. He said if many of the District's Priority 3 responses could be eliminated, that piece of apparatus could be left in place to respond to the more severe calls.

Chief Moore said another challenge was the need to put one of the District's paramedics in the back of a Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) ambulance to assist during transporting the patient to the hospital. He believed he would bring that issue back to the Board for an in depth discussion on how things were done. He stated when a District paramedic was put in the back of an ambulance for a critical call, that engine was out of service until the paramedic returned, due to needing three people on an engine to respond to a call per the labor agreement. He said that meant the engine would be taken out of service for 45 minutes to an hour for Cold Springs. He stated that situation occurred approximately 72 times from January 1st to August 24th, which was not a high percentage of the District's 5,200 medical calls, but he believed at some point there would be back-to-back calls where the District would not be in a position to respond as the closest unit. He stated he was more concerned about that happening in Sun Valley, Spanish Springs, Cold Springs, and Stead. He said there would be a delayed response to the District's constituents if simultaneous calls occurred. He felt the Oversight Committee needed to study the issue, but he needed to come back to the Board on whether the District should do that or not. He said the choice was a difficult one, because there might be a patient who required a third paramedic in the ambulance. He stated the issue was should the District err on the side of life and send a paramedic with the ambulance; therefore, taking the chance of there not being a simultaneous call, or should there be a conversation with REMSA and the Health District about not being able to do that because it was not the District's responsibility to transport patients. He felt having that conversation was the most prudent course to take. He said it would be a difficult decision to make, but this issue would emerge as a problem over time.

Chief Moore said he recommended approval of this Interlocal Agreement, because it would be a significant step forward in getting the EMS system to work better.

Commissioner Hartung asked about the status of the audit he requested to determine the cost to Washoe County's taxpayers when the District assisted REMSA on medical calls. He stated the taxpayers needed to understand there was a cost for the District responding when REMSA should be providing the service. He felt REMSA should at least be giving the District some type of remuneration for fuel, maintenance, and the other costs involved in responding. He believed those costs dwarfed the cost for the members of our team assisting REMSA by riding in the ambulance. He said recently there was an instance where REMSA could not get a fellow out of a boat because they did not have enough staff present. He said the reality was it was their job to provide medical service. He reiterated he had no problem with the District assisting REMSA, but we needed to know what the costs were, and REMSA needed to

participate in collecting that data. Chief Moore said that data would be difficult to obtain because the costs of labor, fuel, equipment, facilities, and training changed over time. Commissioner Hartung stated if all of those costs were taken and rolled into a per call cost, that would be the District's overhead costs every time an engine rolled out of the station, and would provide a good idea of what it would cost to respond to a call. Chief Moore said it would, but it would take funding and approval by the Board to get the Internal Auditor to determine those costs. He stated the best numbers he had were the numbers in the annual operating plans used to respond to the federal agencies. He believed that number was artificially low, because it showed the cost to move an engine to the scene and back was only about \$90 an hour. He stated with the Board's permission, he would engage the Internal Auditor to look at the costs.

Commissioner Hartung asked if there should be an agenda item for the next Board of Fire Commissioner's meeting, so the Board could look at this item specifically with respect to the costs of the Internal Auditor performing an audit. Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel, replied today's agenda item did not allow for the appointment of the County's Internal Auditor to perform an audit, so he would recommend requesting a future agenda item. Commissioner Hartung said he wanted it on the next agenda.

Commissioner Berkbigler said she was not sure all of that information could be gathered until the Interlocal Agreement did what it was intended to do, which was to make sure everyone was communicating, and she was very supportive of this Interlocal Agreement.

Commissioner Berkbigler commented the District did not have a representative on the Oversight Committee because, if the District had a representative, the Cities of Reno and Sparks would also want to have one. She felt the Board would have to trust the County Manager to represent the County's interests.

Commissioner Berkbigler said it was extremely important to remember that the Board of Fire Commissioners made the decision to put paramedics on all of the District's fire engines due to the outlying areas. She felt it should be left to the paramedics to determine whether or not a paramedic needed to be with a patient during transport. She stated if REMSA's paramedics were as well trained as the District's paramedics, it seemed the District should be able to make that decision instead of having it dictated by REMSA. She said perhaps that needed to be brought back for further discussion. Chief Moore agreed every call was different and the best decisions would be made by the paramedics in the field, but doing so could involve some downside risk, and the Oversight Committee could offer the paramedics some criteria to follow.

Chairman Humke stated it was determined many years ago none of the Fire Chiefs should be on the Committee, and there was a core of managers who were working through this. He stated there were three bullet points on page 1 of the staff report, with the first bullet saying "Fix Dispatch." He stated the Sheriff's Office had been the prime mover in fixing Dispatch. He said there was a closed session recently where the Sheriff discussed how he was working to fix Dispatch for all of the agencies. He felt if the Chief wanted to be on the Committee, then the Sheriff would want to be on it, which might lead to the Mayors wanting to be on it also.

Chairman Humke said regarding the second bullet point, it was unsatisfactory that the REMSA Franchise Agreement was opened and then was immediately renewed with no changes being made.

Chairman Humke stated regarding the last bullet point, he would alter it to say "Fix EMS." He believed the District should have a medical transport license. He said within the city limits of Reno and Sparks, people were getting great transport service and it was represented to unincorporated areas they were also getting great service, which was not factual. He said based on an interpretation of the Chief's remarks, EMS was of primary importance and fire service was of secondary importance. He stated as the Chief pointed out, an engine was out of service 72 times, and emergency medical did not care about that; meanwhile they were collecting fees. He said the District did not collect fees, because it worked for the taxpayers. He stated there were many things wrong with the picture.

Commissioner Hartung reiterated taking the engine out of service was a cost to the taxpayers. He said his sense was that REMSA was understaffed and, if they had more paramedics or ambulances, the District would not have the need to take its engines out of service. He asked why REMSA could not add staff to their ambulances, since they were a non-profit organization. He said additional funding was given to REMSA in 1994 to fund an ambulance in Wadsworth, which was supposed to be staffed full-time, but it was not. He stated REMSA was notorious for not living up to their agreements.

Chairman Humke stated forcing an engine out of service by utilizing a District paramedic on the transport vehicle was on par with a city annexing property, collecting a higher rate, but not providing the public-safety services in that newly annexed area; while allowing the existing fire agency to provide those services.

In response to the call for public comment, J. Parker said his message would be to consider a consolidated fire department to cover the whole area, which worked well in other areas. He said the fire department in Costa County, California provided all emergency-medical transportation rather than having separate agencies. He stated he also believed their approach would cost less.

Commissioner Hartung noted Costa County charged the patient for arriving on the scene.

On motion by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Chairman Humke, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 7 be approved. The Interlocal Agreement for same is attached hereto and made a part of the minutes thereof.

14-128F AGENDA ITEM 8

Agenda Subject: "Possible Closed Session pursuant to NRS 288.220 for the purpose of discussing with management representatives labor matters and negotiations."

There was no closed session.

14-129F AGENDA ITEM 9

Agenda Subject: “Commissioners’/Chief’s Announcements, requests for information and identification of topics for future agendas. (No discussion among Commissioners or action will take place on this item.)”

Commissioner Hartung requested a public hearing, so the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) could answer questions regarding the 1994 Agreement to provide a 24-hour ground ambulance staged in Wadsworth. He said the Agreement included a 5.3 percent increase tacked on to each bill REMSA collected since 1994, which was used to recover the cost they incurred to staff the 24/7 ground ambulance. He stated prior to holding the hearing, he requested the County’s Internal Auditor perform an audit to determine how much REMSA collected each year to cover the cost of the dedicated ambulance in Wadsworth, which REMSA estimated in 1994 would take \$27 per call countywide to cover those costs. He said he was not sure what the agreed upon amount was; however, something was paid to REMSA. He stated the biggest complaint by the people in Wadsworth was about the ambulance service REMSA provided.

Chairman Humke stated he would add to Commissioner Hartung’s request that the amount paid by the ratepayers be recouped from REMSA and given back to the ratepayers. Commissioner Hartung agreed.

Commissioner Berkbigler asked why her husband’s bill to be transported from their house in the City of Reno to the hospital in the City of Reno cost \$528 if REMSA said they only got \$27 per patient.

Commissioner Berkbigler stated the Anjeanette Damon article in the *Reno Gazette Journal (RGJ)* did a fairly good job of representing the interests of the fire department, but she asked why the line was drawn where it was and why the people on one side of street paid the .54 percent fire tax and people on the other side of the street did not. She said if it was assumed Washoe County would continue to grow to the north, this issue needed to be addressed. She thought this was an agenda item that needed to be discussed.

14-0130F AGENDA ITEM 10

Agenda Subject: “Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to three minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Board of Fire Commissioners agenda. The Commission will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Commission as a whole.”

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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12:42 p.m. There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

DAVID HUMKE, Chairman
Truckee Meadows Fire
Protection District and Sierra
Fire Protection District

ATTEST:

NANCY PARENT, Washoe County Clerk
and Ex-Officio Clerk, Truckee Meadows
Fire Protection District and Sierra Fire
Protection District

*Minutes Prepared By:
Jan Frazzetta, Deputy County Clerk*