

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

TUESDAY

10:00 A.M.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

PRESENT:

Bob Lucey, Chair
Marsha Berkbigler, Vice Chair
Kitty Jung, Commissioner (via telephone)
Vaughn Hartung, Commissioner
Jeanne Herman, Commissioner

Jan Galassini, Chief Deputy County Clerk
Charles Moore, Fire Chief
Mary Kandaras, Deputy District Attorney

The Board convened at 10:00 a.m. in regular session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

20-118F AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

20-119F AGENDA ITEM 4 Announcements/Reports.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore noted the November meeting was scheduled on election day, which could present a conflict. Chair Lucey said he would confer with Chief Moore before then.

Vice Chair Berkbigler thanked the fire service for their efforts, expressing pride in the way the teams surrounded and controlled fires on the Nevada side while California firefighters worked to battle blazes in the neighboring state. She said the TMFPD was an excellent team and Chief Moore was a great leader. She remarked the 2020 fire season had been a challenge as staff had to fight fires while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Hartung expressed appreciation for the District's hard work, agreeing it had been a very difficult year with record-breaking fires still burning in California. He asked the TMFPD Peer Support Team to look into the possibility of working together with the Nevada Physicians Wellness Coalition to share resources, noting the Coalition had a hotline for physicians and family members who dealt with issues similar to those faced by the TMFPD's first responders. He said he would provide the Coalition's resource line phone number to Chief Moore after the meeting.

Chair Lucey said there had been several fires, auto accidents, and emergencies since the last Board meeting, with staff working hard to fight multiple fires caused by lightning storms since June. He noted homes had been saved during the Arrowcreek Fire and he praised the TMFPD for being ready and effective. He stated the use of the new equipment to fight fires was impressive and necessary, citing one fire in July that could have been devastating had the District's new ladder truck not been available. He agreed it had been a tough fire season and staff had done a great job.

CONSENT ITEMS – 5A through 5D

- 20-120F** **5A** Recommendation to approve the meeting minutes from the July 21, 2020 Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting. (All Commission Districts)
- 20-121F** **5B** Recommendation to approve the reclassification of the Logistics Chief position, with a salary range of \$110,864 to 126,422, to a Division Chief position, with a salary range of \$121,950 to \$139,110, and a total fiscal impact of \$17,700 in FY21, as part of a planned restructuring of the organization to create four divisions under the Deputy Fire Chief as follows: Emergency Medical Services, Administrative Services, Fuels/Wildfire and Operations, to provide more efficient delivery of services to the community. (All Commission Districts)
- 20-122F** **5C** Recommendation to approve the job classification, salary range and to create one new position of Logistics Coordinator at a salary range of \$43,762 to \$56,638 as a regular PERS position for a total estimated cost of \$72,522 including benefits for FY 21. (All Commission Districts)
- 20-123F** **5D** Recommendation to authorize the sale of a surplus 2003 Pierce Quantum Reserve Engine with 178,995 miles in “as is” condition from the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District to the City of Reno in the amount of \$1.00. The City has been leasing the engine and has provided \$33,000 in payments, and this apparatus has reached the end of its useful life pursuant to the District's fire engine replacement schedule. (All Commission Districts)

Chair Lucey requested clarification regarding Agenda Item 5B. Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore explained that, if approved, Agenda Item 5B would help to restructure the chain of command for at least 15 positions presently reporting to Deputy Fire Chief Alex Kukulus. Chief Moore would eventually retire and the restructuring would create opportunities for other staff members to learn and grow in preparation for that time. He said staff would be given opportunities to learn more of the administrative, training, logistics, wildfire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) duties required of Chief positions within the District.

Chief Moore advised that four new Division Chief positions would be created, including one for EMS, one for Administrative Services, and an Operations

Division Chief to oversee the Battalion Chiefs. Currently, six Battalion Chiefs reported to the Deputy Chief, he added, and between these and the position's other direct reports, the Deputy Chief was overwhelmed. Chief Moore concluded restructuring the command staff would bring the District more in line with a proper span of control.

Commissioner Jung agreed, saying Washoe County was also working on legacy planning, cross training, and staff development to prepare for the retirement of the Baby Boomer generation. She commended the reduction in span of control, saying she knew Deputy Chief Kukulius worked all over the place and all hours of the day and night, but one person could only do so much. She praised Chief Moore's experience, preparedness, and forward thinking, recalling how he too had spread himself thin when in the Deputy Chief position. She indicated the plans to restructure and grow staff from within would serve the District well into the future.

Commissioner Hartung also felt this was a good plan to distribute the District's workload more evenly. He called attention to Agenda Item 5D, saying the sale of the District's used equipment to the City of Reno was an example of an effective community partnership which would benefit both agencies and allow the equipment to continue to serve the residents of Washoe County. Chair Lucey agreed and indicated staff had done a good job in planning the restructuring to make the District more efficient and effective.

There was no public comment on the Consent Agenda Items listed above.

On motion by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Vice Chair Berkbigler, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 5A through 5D be approved.

20-124F **AGENDA ITEM 6A** Fire Chief Report: Informational briefing on operational matters and activities for the month of August and September 2020 to include the following items:

1. Review of Recent Wildfires
2. Discussion on 2nd Bond for Facility and Capital Projects Update
3. Plan for future Budget Adjustments
4. TMFR Website Launch

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore discussed the green waste program. There were 10 staff members dedicated to fuels who would be reassigned to green waste on weekends whenever possible, and most likely every weekend during the months of October and November. He said the District had identified the communities where green waste events would be held: Washoe Valley, the greater Galena area, Caughlin Ranch, Verdi, Silver Lake, Palomino Valley, Sun Valley, and Spanish Springs. If possible, the Chief said, another event would also be held in Lemmon Valley. He explained green waste piles were burned the previous year because trucking costs were prohibitive, but he understood citizens were likely tired of all the smoke from the wildfires in Nevada and California during the 2020 fire season. He hoped the District

would be able to haul the chipped and masticated green waste to the local recycling facility this year. He thanked NV Energy for their partnership in the program and said media would be notified of green waste event locations.

Chief Moore displayed an incident map and indicated Deputy Chief Alex Kukulus would review the recent wildfires in the area. Chief Moore explained the reason Nevada was so smoky was the number of fires burning in California to the west, Oregon and Washington to the north, and Arizona to the south; unless the wind blew just right, there was really no way for Nevadans to escape the smoke. He noted the air was currently relatively clear but it was expected to get smoky again soon. Chief Moore also thanked the Board for their compliments regarding staff's work. He said everyone was putting in maximum effort to fight fires both within the County and in other areas. Staff was backfilling stations to provide coverage so Washoe County residents remained protected while others provided mutual aid to other regions. He thanked Deputy Chief Kukulus for working around the clock along with everyone else. He expressed pride and gratitude for the District and its hardworking staff.

Deputy Chief Kukulus conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He reviewed slides with the following titles: TMFR Fire Season 2020; This Year in Numbers; Fire Season Trending Above Average; three untitled slides with video; and Other Assets.

Deputy Chief Kukulus stated there had been 134 wildland fires within the District so far during the 2020 fire season, averaging about 1.5 fires per day; nearly 15,000 personnel hours had been committed and over 10,000 acres were burned. He noted the District received four federal Fire Management Assistance Grants, more than any other fire season. 21 red flag warnings had been issued after averaging around 14 warnings per year for the past 10 years. According to Chris Smallcomb at the National Weather Service, Deputy Chief Kukulus said, the region was expecting triple-digit temperatures again in the next week and the fire risk would likely continue into September. He added staff had been fortunate to be able to manage the busy fire season while also repaying some of the mutual aid the District had received in previous months by assisting other areas with their fires. Up until the past weekend, 22 personnel members had been out on assignments, which was approximately one-fifth of the operational workforce; at present, he said, the count was 17. Some staff members had been sent to assist with the Sling Fire near Walker and Coleville, California, and others were scattered around the country in Colorado and other parts of California as needed.

Deputy Chief Kukulus displayed a graph depicting that the region was trending above seasonal averages; if the trajectory continued, he warned, 2020 would be a record-setting fire season. He played footage of the Loyaltown Fire, which had made the national news. The footage was shot in the area of Highway 395 southbound near the Bordertown exit, after the evacuation of the Silver Knolls community. During the evacuation, the fire jumped all four lanes of the freeway, including the median. Staff utilized bulldozers and an engine to protect some of the residents who had been surrounded

by flames. He noted he had been asked many times about the horses seen fleeing in the video, and he reported they had fared well.

Deputy Chief Kukulus also showed footage of the North Fire near Red Rock and Rancho Haven. He said crews had made good progress during the day, but the fire burned erratically all through the night until sunrise the next morning when a thunderstorm helped firefighters finally gain control. He expressed appreciation for the crew members' hard work and added that not a single residence was lost, even though several hundred had been immediately threatened. He said the community had good defensible space for crews to work with and it also helped that there had been lead time to bring in mutual aid resources as the fire came over the hill. The North Fire started very similarly to the Loyaltan Fire, beginning in three different spots, jumping the highway, and spreading across the flats up into the Peterson range.

Deputy Chief Kukulus shared footage of the W5 Fire off Highway 447, north of Gerlach. The video showed crews backburning, and he said they had done an impressive job of holding the fire back and pushing it into California where it remained; at last check, it had burned around 81,000 acres. He stated staff had been there 9 or 10 days and he anticipated they would return around the end of the week. He displayed a photo of some of the aircraft used during the Rock Farm Fire near the Arrowcreek and Saddlehorn communities. Deputy Chief Kukulus said aviation assets, such as large airliners from McClellan Air Force Base and helicopters from the Nevada Division of Forestry, had been a huge help to the District. He also mentioned that the new dozer program was still in its infancy and the 2020 fire season had provided opportunities for personnel to be trained on the equipment. He did not know whether the outcomes would have been as favorable without aircraft and bulldozer assistance. He encouraged staff to hang in there, saying he expected the fire season to continue for another month or so, and he again thanked everyone for doing a tremendous job.

Chair Lucey thanked Deputy Chief Kukulus, noting he had seen the Deputy Chief in command at the Rock Farm Fire and was very impressed. He asked whether the District paid for transporting dozers out to each fire. Deputy Chief Kukulus replied each dozer was a package with its own tractor and trailer. Chair Lucey inquired as to where the District stored the equipment. The Deputy Chief explained that one was normally stored at Station 46 in Spanish Springs and another was kept at Station 30 in Washoe Valley, but they were moved depending on where they were needed during red flag warning days. He noted the District had the title to one of the dozers which had been purchased as federal excess property, and the other was loaned through an agreement with the Nevada Division of Forestry for an indefinite period of time.

Commissioner Hartung thanked Deputy Chief Kukulus and staff for all their hard work. He explained the Cielo Fire had been very near his house, but the District quickly mobilized many resources to fight it. He felt this demonstrated that the investments the Board voted on had paid off. He described the sight of large aircraft flying in low to drop loads of retardant as awe-inspiring.

Deputy Chief Kukulus added that the new Fuels Chief had recently joined the District and he was glad not to have had to face the 2020 fire season without him. He also said the new fuel squads were a tremendous asset that allowed the District to free up resources and send crews to other areas as needed.

Chair Lucey praised the District and its staff, imploring residents to continue being cautious, fire-aware, and to remember that the 2020 fire season was not yet over. He reminded residents that firefighters and first responders put in a lot of hard work and sacrificed time away from their families to help keep the region safe, and he hoped the community would show appreciation by reducing fire risks wherever possible.

Chief Moore explained that Agenda Items A2 and A3 would be presented together. Chief Deputy County Clerk Jan Galassini noted handouts for the agenda items had been distributed to the board and placed on the record.

Chief Moore stated staff was contemplating requesting a second bond, possibly within the next fiscal year. The purpose of the bond would be to build the consolidated station in Washoe Valley, purchase the headquarters building currently under lease at 3663 Barron Way, and possibly purchase training props and more office space for the training division. He wanted to make sure the Board was comfortable with the direction on the second bond request, asking Chief Fiscal Officer Cindy Vance to assist with the presentation.

Chief Moore believed the Board would be very comfortable moving forward after Ms. Vance explained the District's financial position. He added Station 37 would make a presentation to the Citizen Advisory Board to explain changes to the configuration and provide an update on the new house being purchased. Upon approval by the Board of Adjustment, the Hidden Valley project could begin with design, development, and construction drawings. Chief Moore said staff hoped to start planning for the consolidated station at the same time, so costs could be determined and staff could get an idea of how much the bond would need to be. He recalled Commissioner Jung had inquired whether adjustments could be made if the economy took a turn for the worse, and he said he would provide some of his thoughts on the subject once Ms. Vance explained the District's financial position.

Ms. Vance reviewed the document titled "General Fund Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Update Through 6/30/2020 (as of 8/31/20)", a copy of which had been distributed to the Board and placed on file with the Clerk. She stated the District had issued medium-term debt for equipment last year and was currently preparing a second bond of \$2.1 million to use for planning and reimbursing the District for the house recently purchased in Washoe Valley. A request for proposal would be created and brought back to the Board in October, and the bond for the property would be part of the General Fund. She noted the District was still within the closing process and there could be minimal changes before financial statements were audited.

Ms. Vance said the District had just received its final Consolidated Tax payment, which happened to be the highest payment it received all year; this had been a pleasant surprise to staff during an uncertain economic time. Year-to-date revenues were almost \$32 million, exceeding the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget as well as estimated revenues, and Ms. Vance said it looked as though the District's ending fund balance would be larger than expected for the beginning of FY21. She added that expenses were expected to be around \$29.9 million and she anticipated a few small changes before the books were closed, but nothing significant. Net revenues over expenses were approximately \$1.3 million, resulting in a change in fund balance of \$500,000 for the FY21 budget, which would give staff room to adjust as needed for the upcoming fiscal year.

Chair Lucey and Commissioner Jung requested clarification on the exact amount of the change for FY21. Commissioner Jung also wanted to know more about the strategy behind staff's plan. Ms. Vance explained it was all part of a long-term process for the District's debt, which had been started before the District contemplated purchasing the property in Washoe Valley or the new administration building.

Commissioner Hartung noted bond rates were currently at an all-time low. Chief Moore added that, if the economy began to deteriorate, the Washoe Valley station could be switched to a four-person crew, resulting in significant salary savings. Commissioner Hartung asked where the positions would be housed if they were moved to the north; Chief Moore said two-person rescues could be placed in Sun Valley, Silver Lake, and Lemmon Valley. Commissioner Hartung indicated more coverage was needed in the north, and the Chief agreed most fires occurred in the northern part of the County. Commissioner Hartung thanked staff for trying to move forward, and he felt having a rescue at Station 45 would be a good use of resources.

Commissioner Jung was glad the fire meeting had been cancelled in August at the height of fire season. She spoke in support of allowing the Chief continued flexibility to cancel or reschedule meetings when the District was busy, when a meeting was not legally required, and when doing so would also help conserve resources.

Chief Moore shared that the District launched a new website in early August. He noted the launch was somewhat delayed due to the pandemic and busy wildfire season, but a link to the new site was now available on the Washoe County website. The newly redesigned site included a page listing all Fire Board meetings back to the year 1999, general fire prevention information, and information regarding emergency operations under Deputy Chief Kukulus. He explained the website's newly increased bandwidth now allowed the TMFPD to tell their story in more detail, including career information and other resources. The District also provided fiscal documents online for increased transparency, and the Our History tab included a timeline of the District's history and activities. Contact information for TMFPD staff was included, and every page had a link to translate the content into Spanish. Chief Moore felt this was particularly important as approximately 25 percent of the District's constituents were Spanish-speaking. He hoped the redesign would help citizens access information more easily and noted there was a link

to register for the Code Red regional alert system. He thanked the design team for their efforts.

Commissioner Jung suggested highlighting the fact that every fire engine had a paramedic on staff, as she felt it was important to distinguish the funding that contributed to the District's lifesaving measures. Communications Manager Adam Mayberry thanked Commissioner Jung for the suggestion and noted that every photo on the new website was authentic and original to the TMFPD.

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

20-125F **AGENDA ITEM 6B** Commissioner Dashboard: Status update on ongoing Commissioner requests of the Fire Chief.

Chief Moore provided an update on the shooting range, saying the County would need to be involved with planning. Commissioner Herman stated that discussion with the County was underway.

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

BLOCK VOTE – AGENDA ITEMS 7, 8, and 10

20-126F **AGENDA ITEM 7** Recommendation to retroactively approve the purchase of one new All Poly 3000 Gallon Tanker Pumper from Midwest Fire of Luverne, Minnesota in the amount of \$260,768 using the emergency purchase provisions of NRS 332.112 and utilizing the District's Emergency fund in accordance with NRS 474.510. (All Commission Districts)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 7 be approved.

20-127F **AGENDA ITEM 8** Recommendation to approve the purchase of twenty (20) Self Contained Breathing Apparatus and associated equipment from MES in the amount of \$234,194.25. (All Commission Districts).

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 8 be approved.

20-128F **AGENDA ITEM 10** Recommendation to approve a 3-year Master Services Agreement between Rebound LLC and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, effective September 1, 2020 for the purpose of managing employees' work-related orthopedic injuries and reducing injury-related costs in the amount of \$45,133 for the first year, \$47,390 for the second year and \$49,757 for the third year. The total amount of the contract is \$142,280. (All Commission Districts)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 10 be approved.

20-129F **AGENDA ITEM 9** Recommendation to approve five (5) positions for one (1) Squad Boss with a salary range of \$54,184 to \$70,012 with Regular Nevada Public Employees' Retirement System (NV PERS) and four (4) Crew Members with a salary range of \$41,995 - \$54,496 with Regular NV PERS, which will add a third squad to the Fuels Reduction Program. (All Commission Districts)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Vice Chair Berkbigler, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 9 be approved.

20-130F **AGENDA ITEM 11** Announcements/Reports.

Commissioner Jung said she had received emails and phone calls from constituents who were concerned about speeding and illegal street racing within the county. She indicated discussion might be needed regarding the possibility of increased patrolling, but she also expressed concern the County might not have enough resources to respond.

Chair Lucey agreed the illegal speeding and racing activities had a massive impact on local roads and it pulled crews away from critical fire prevention functions during the fire season. He thought it would be good to create a task force to address the issues, noting the activity was occurring frequently in the Mount Rose Highway area where drinking and driving was also of increasing concern. He requested further discussion at a future meeting. Chief Moore confirmed that a future agenda item would be created to discuss the requested topics.

Vice Chair Berkbigler said there had been questions during a recent Washoe County District Board of Health meeting regarding what was going on with the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA). She indicated clarification was needed and the TMFPD could not pull trucks away from the District's own emergencies in order to compensate for the fact that REMSA was not hiring enough.

20-131F **AGENDA ITEM 12** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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11:07 a.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

BOB LUCEY, Chair
Truckee Meadows Fire
Protection District

ATTEST:

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

*Minutes Prepared By:
LJ Burton, Deputy County Clerk*