

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

TUESDAY

9:00 A.M.

JULY 18, 2000

PRESENT:

**Ted F. Short, Chairman**  
**Jim Shaw, Vice Chairman**  
**Jim Galloway, Commissioner**

**Marty Scheuerman, Operations Chief**  
**Amy Harvey, County Clerk**  
**Katy Singlaub, County Manager**  
**Madelyn Shipman, Legal Counsel**

ABSENT:

**Joanne Bond, Commissioner**  
**Pete Sferrazza, Commissioner**

The Board met in regular session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada, and conducted the following business:

**AGENDA**

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Commissioner Galloway, which motion duly carried, Chairman Short ordered that the agenda for the July 18, 2000, meeting be approved.

**MINUTES**

On motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion duly carried, Chairman Short ordered that the following minutes be approved: May 9, 2000 special meeting, May 15, 2000 special meeting, May 16, 2000 regular meeting, and May 23, 2000 special meeting.

**00-34F      FIRE DISTRICT OPERATIONS REPORT**

Operations Chief Marty Scheuerman reviewed the operations report stating that, at the same time consolidation was being implemented, there were numerous brush fires due to lightning, four of which became major fires, which he listed, and that many homes and animals had to be evacuated. He also reported on other fires and incidents.

Chief Scheuerman advised that they have started consolidating the daily operations of the two departments; that a transition committee consisting of management and union personnel has been meeting and has contributed to the success of the transition; that the problems so far have been minor; that staffing is being worked out and improved upon; and that the volunteers have been used successfully on all of the incidents and are still a critical aspect of the operation. He stated that there are still some things that need to be worked out in terms of the financial arrangements and how District funds are distributed, which staff is working on; that they are planning to continue having these Fire District meetings on the third Tuesday of each month; that he will present a report of operations at each meeting; that if a Board member has an item for the agenda, he should contact the Chief; and that he will be the liaison for the Fire Commissioners' meetings.

Chief Scheuerman stated that they are updating the run cards and have discovered that a truck company can be added to the response; that Company 2 on Sutro can get to Spanish Springs in 11 minutes; and that response duplication is being diminished and closer resources are being used by looking at all of the facilities as one large pool instead of from the automatic aid viewpoint, which provides an immediate benefit to the residents of the District and the City of Reno. The Chief also reported that they are working on the dispatch issues and will be bringing a proposed resolution to the problems to the meeting next Tuesday (July 25, 2000).

Chairman Short asked about the brush engine that was burned over. Chief Scheuerman stated that it was not completely destroyed, but it will probably take 2 months to get it back in service. Commissioner Shaw asked if it can be repaired locally, and the Chief stated that it will probably have to be repaired in California.

Commissioner Galloway noted that the District was approximately 95 percent current on fire inspections and asked if that would continue. Chief Scheuerman stated that there is no reason that won't continue at the same level; that the inspectors are still here and still inspecting; and that he will add that information to the future operations reports.

Commissioner Galloway then asked if the increase in brush fires is a result of the reduction in grazing or other restrictions on using public lands. Chief Scheuerman stated that prevention efforts and immediate suppression have been the policies used here for many, many years, which has allowed the brush and trees to grow; and that the problem they are now faced with is that people are living in the middle of all this fuel. Chairman Short asked if people are cooperating in providing the 30-foot defensible space around their homes. The Chief stated that there is fairly good voluntary compliance, but there are always those who want to keep their surroundings as natural as possible and refuse to destroy trees or brush. He stated that they will continue to educate the public about the importance of defensible space.

**00-35F            FIRE INSPECTION FEES**

Chief Scheuerman distributed information concerning the fees charged by Reno and Sparks for fire inspections. He stated that there are many different charges based on all the different inspections that have to be done; that growth is driving a lot of extra plan reviews; that unfunded mandates requiring them to track or regulate certain things have created an increased work load for the inspectors; and that both the District and Sierra Forest Fire Protection District would like to start charging for specific items modeling the fees in accordance with the City of Reno fees.

Chairman Short noted that Sparks charges according to actual time and Reno has a set fee schedule. The Chief stated that Reno's fee schedule is actually based on the average time expended for a particular task. Chairman Short asked if the Nevada Division of Forestry charges for inspections. The Chief stated that they do not, but they would like to; and that to adopt a fee schedule, the fire code would have to be updated and the charges would be for both agencies.

Commissioner Galloway requested a financial analysis indicating where the fees would go noting that the District has been providing these services without charging; that in the past this has been covered by the 48-cent tax rate; and that if new fees are established, perhaps there should be a reduction in the 48-cent rate. He stated that he does not want this to be a hidden tax increase. The Chief stated that he believes the funds would go directly into the District's budget and would be held outside the consolidated budget; and that this might be a way to prevent raising taxes in the future by providing another source of revenue. Commissioner Galloway stated that he would like to make sure that was correct and requested that the financial analysis show detailed data on what has been done in the past compared to what it would look like if the fees were collected, how much net additional money might be collected, whether there is a justification for it, whether it can be used to pay Reno, or whether there should be a reduction in the tax rate. The Chief stated that they have been collecting data and tracking time; and that it will be 3 or 4 months before they have a comprehensive package to present.

Commissioner Shaw asked if the fees in the handout were implemented in 1997. Reno Fire Chief Lowden stated that the fees were reviewed in 1997, but the code was adopted in 1998; and that there were some minor changes in fees. He added that the fees had actually been in place for 3 or 4 years prior to that without significant changes other than cost-of-living adjustments. Chairman Short asked if the fees cover the costs. Chief Lowden stated that they cover the costs of doing the actual inspection work.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There was no response to the call for public comments.

## COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Chairman Short asked if anyone was still located at the Washoe County Administration Complex. Chief Scheuerman advised that the TMFPD inspectors, the Training Chief and the training officers, some clerical staff including the payroll clerk, and his office are still in this building. The Chief stated that his e-mail and his voice mail are still the same.

Commissioner Galloway asked the Chief to arrange to have Mr. Boykin from the volunteer association come to a future meeting so the Board can hear from him regarding how he thinks consolidation is working or if there is still a fear that the volunteers will be phased out.

Chairman Short asked if the Department thinks they have caught the arsonist involved in recent fires. Chief Lowden stated that two individuals have been arrested that he feels are responsible for some of the fires, but he does believe there are other individuals still at large.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned.

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TED F. SHORT, Chairman  
Truckee Meadows Fire  
Protection District

ATTEST: AMY HARVEY, County Clerk

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