

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

TUESDAY

2:00 P.M.

JULY 24, 2001

PRESENT:

**Jim Shaw, Chairman**  
**Pete Sferrazza, Vice Chairman**  
**Joanne Bond, Commissioner**  
**Jim Galloway, Commissioner**  
**Ted F. Short, Commissioner**

**Marty Scheuerman, Chief of Operations**  
**Nancy Parent, Chief Deputy County Clerk**  
**Katy Singlaub, County Manager**  
**Madelyn Shipman, Legal Counsel**

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 Bond, seconded by Commissioner Short, which motion duly carried, Chairman Shaw ordered that the agenda for the July 24, 2001, meeting be approved.

**MINUTES**

On motion by Commissioner Bond, seconded by Commissioner Short, which motion duly carried, Chairman Shaw ordered that the minutes of the regular meeting of June 19, 2001, be approved.

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Commissioner Galloway temporarily left the meeting.

**01-35F REPORT OF OPERATIONS**

Marty Scheuerman, Operations Chief, Reno Fire Department, reviewed the monthly report of operations.

On motion by Commissioner Bond, seconded by Commissioner Short, which motion duly carried, Chairman Shaw ordered that receipt of the Monthly Operations Report be acknowledged.

**01-36F            REPORT ON VOLUNTEER AND AUXILIARY OPERATIONS**

Roy Slate, Division Chief, Reno Fire Department, reviewed the volunteer and auxiliary operations report. He advised they are moving forward on some of the volunteer station projects, as well as the volunteer brochure project. Commissioner Bond requested a status report on the changes being made to some of the volunteer stations.

On motion by Commissioner Bond, seconded by Commissioner Short, which motion duly carried, Chairman Shaw ordered that receipt of the Report on Volunteer and Auxiliary Operations be acknowledged.

**01-37F            DISCUSSION – FEDERAL POLICY ON USE OF FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT IN DESIGNATED WILDERNESS AREAS**

Chief Scheuerman presented a copy of the Federal Wilderness Act in response to the question raised recently as to why specific types of firefighting equipment were not allowed within the wilderness area. He reviewed the Prohibition of Certain Uses section of the Act that states "...there shall be no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or motor boats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area." He then reviewed the Special Provisions section of the Act which states that the use of aircraft or motorboats may be permitted "...in the control of fire, insects, and diseases, subject to such conditions as the Secretary deems desirable." He advised that Secretary refers to the Secretary of Agriculture.

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Commissioner Galloway returned to the meeting.

Gary Schiff, District Ranger, Carson Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest, provided a copy of the Forest Service Manual that delegates where they go for authority to use vehicles, aircraft, and equipment. He said they had the authority to immediately authorize chain saws, helicopter landings, and portable pumps at the start of the Martis Fire, but authority for the use of bulldozers lies with the Regional Forester in Ogden, Utah. The Incident Commander determined that bulldozer equipment was not warranted for the Martis Fire because of the rugged terrain, and they did not make that request of the Regional Forester. Mr. Schiff then responded to questions of the Board.

Commissioner Galloway said he is somewhat distressed that the local agency has to call Ogden. He requested information regarding the chain of command and what gives the Ogden, Utah Forester the authority to authorize bulldozer equipment. He said he would like to review this information and, if the Federal law looks to be unduly cumbersome, possibly a request could be made to make the law more fire prevention friendly. Mr. Schiff said he would provide that information.

Mr. Schiff then reviewed the rehabilitation process from the Martis Fire consisting of (1) suppression rehab immediately after the fire, (2) burned area emergency rehab, and (3) a long-term rehabilitation plan. He commented that there are numerous regularly occurring fire issues in the Ranger District; that the Carson Ranger District surrounds the Cities of Reno and Sparks in many ways; and that the National Forest organization would be pleased to improve their ties with the Commission with a quarterly update or a field tour to further the understanding of National Forest issues in the Truckee Meadows area. Chairman Shaw stated that Mr. Schiff's suggestion would be appropriate.

Commissioner Short thanked the Forest Service for the resources they supplied and their efforts in assisting in the Martis Fire.

**01-38F            DISCUSSION – USE OF NATIONAL AIR GUARD AIRCRAFTS  
FOR FIRE SUPPRESSION**

Marty Scheuerman, Operations Chief, Reno Fire Department, said the issue of the potential uses of National Guard air tankers, etc. for firefighting was brought up at the last meeting. He provided a copy of Pressler Law that protects private industry by requiring that private resources be used before putting Federal resources, such as air tankers, into service.

Colonel Larry Matlock, Air National Guard, discussed matters concerning their C-130 cargo handling aircraft. He advised they had their first opportunity to use the C-130 for the Martis Fire and, during that situation, realized there were numerous shortfalls in the deployment procedure, which is now being looked at. He reviewed their aerial infrared photography mapping system, advising it fits into any C-130 cargo handling aircraft and allows them to interject into command and control from the early stages of a fire to the point where it is no longer deemed necessary. He stated that the earliest the aircraft could get airborne is about two hours, which is how long it would take to get the aircraft generated, a crew briefed, and interpreters set for the mission. He said they bring a unique opportunity to Washoe County and the Western United States, and many things can be done with the C-130 to provide aid to the local community and the State. Colonel Matlock advised they also have a Federal mission and three aircraft are currently deployed to support the Kosovo effort. Concerning the question as to why they are not involved in firefighting with suppressant, he said they believe the community is better served by taking advantage of their particular expertise. He then responded to questions of the Board.

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, thanked Commissioner Sferrazza for listening to him and putting this item on the agenda. He said he has been fighting for a long time for the Air Guard to get a firefighting version of the C-130. He stated that his comments are in no way meant to cast any aspersion on the Air Guard, as it consists of a great group of women and men, and noted that they were trying to get the fighter plane but got a cargo mission C-130 instead. Mr. Dehne presented documentation that he said sets forth a basic suggestion that the Nevada Air National Guard fulfill its mission of protecting

lives and property in Nevada. He said he is tired of the paralysis of habit seen at top levels in government to find ways to stop innovation. Mr. Dehne stated that two hours to get a C-130 airborne is too long, and suggested the Air Guard have two or three firefighting versions of the C-130 that would be on alert for instant notice to try to stop fires, in addition to the C-130 that has the infrared system.

Colonel Matlock commented that eight systems will be operational and a ninth system is being developed; that each system costs \$1-million; and that all have been dedicated. He advised that the Nevada Air Guard is not in line for a new system, noting that their plate is currently full, and they provide a lot of emergency assistance at the Federal and State level.

Mr. Dehne commented that Colonel Matlock talks about tremendous expense, but there is a tremendous expense to send airplanes to Kosovo and other places where they do not really belong.

Following further discussion, Commissioner Galloway requested that staff review the existing restrictions on the use of Federal aircraft and suggestions be brought back to the Board to determine whether changes might be requested that would facilitate the Air Guard's fire operation.

**01-39F            RESOLUTION – JOHN B. IRWIN – ORIGINAL FIRE CHIEF OF TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

Marty Scheuerman, Operations Chief, Reno Fire Department, advised that Ron Irwin is apparently out of town, and he would make sure the family receives the Resolution plaque honoring John B. Irwin, the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District's original Fire Chief, who passed away last month. Chairman Shaw read the Resolution into the record.

On motion by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Galloway, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that the following Resolution be adopted and Chairman Shaw be authorized to execute:

**WHEREAS**, John B. Irwin was the first Fire Chief of Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District which he served with great dedication, enthusiasm, and diplomacy; and

**WHEREAS**, John B. Irwin was a highly respected member of Reno Sparks community and regional fire services; and

**WHEREAS**, John B. Irwin was an active and valued member of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District; and

**WHEREAS**, John B. Irwin loved and generously served his community in Washoe County, was always dedicated to making it a better safer place, and was a champion for the safety and well being of our community; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, by the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, Board of Fire Commissioners, that the citizens of Washoe County do hereby pay tributes to the memory, courage and devotion of John B. Irwin and share with his family and many friends their sorrow and loss, which is a loss to all of us.

**01-40F            COLD SPRINGS CAREER FIRE STATION**

Marty Scheuerman, Operations Chief, Reno Fire Department, advised that Chief Boykin, Cold Springs Volunteer First Department, is not present today and agreed to hold this item until more research could be done concerning the plan to locate a new career station in Cold Springs.

Jon Wagner, Reno Firefighters Local 731, said the Cold Springs Fire Station location has probably been planned for five years or longer, as decisions concerning station locations have been carefully made. He suggested the decision should be made based on an analysis of the most current data on call volume and expected development. Mr. Wagner stated that the Cold Springs engine company would provide an increased depth of resources for all of the North Valleys; and that the station location in Cold Springs was part of the Interlocal Agreement with Reno, which should not be changed lightly.

Upon inquiry of Commissioner Sferrazza, Mr. Wagner advised that a career station in Cold Springs would probably have an impact on the volunteer station, noting that as an area becomes more urbanized and the tax base is able to support a professional fire station, volunteers are utilized less. He commented that, at the insistence of the County Commission during consolidation negotiations, Reno Fire agreed to the status quo concerning the volunteers and has been working with them over the last year, which relationship would continue.

**VOLUNTEER/AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP COMMENTS**

Terry Donohue, Station Manager, Brown/Huffaker Auxiliary, advised that, prior to the merger, Chief Brunstrom had a dedicated schedule for upgrading their big equipment. He said they are in dire need for the Board to put a little more money in the budget for upgrades to their brush gear, brush engines, and brush tenders, and requested this item be placed on a future agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ken Miller, Lemmon Valley resident, voiced his concerns that, while the customer is being served under the fire agreement, they are being forgotten through all the posturing and turf battles occurring among the various agencies involved. He said he

is worried about a particular sphere of influence extension that could result in annexation and taking him out of the County. He requested that the Commissioners keep in mind that the customer does not care what is going on within the groups, but just wants the service they used to have but do not seem to have now.

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, said he is against any further Reno City Hall annexations, and the citizens should be protected. He then said the kitty litter mine should be told to get out of town.

**01-41F            EMERGENCY ITEM – ADDENDUM - ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL FIRE DISTRICT**

Commissioner Galloway advised that he was the alternate for the Fire Advisory Board on two occasions. He said there was extensive discussion concerning holding meetings with community involvement about how to proceed toward a true regional fire district, which is a future goal that both the Reno City Council and the County Commission approved. He advised there was discussion about including this goal in the bylaws, but the City of Reno objected to that and, at a later meeting, objected to even having discussion about the matter. He stated he is not sure the Fire Advisory Board is the best place to discuss the future of the regional fire district but is concerned about where that issue is going to be discussed. Commissioner Galloway commented that he is willing to adopt any alternate plan but would not want the matter dropped and has requested the issue be put on the September joint meeting with Reno

Commissioner Bond, member of the Fire Advisory Board, said she would like to see County and City staffs, including Sparks, if they want to get involved, start working on a proposal to look at the feasibility of establishing a regional fire district or some other option, which could be brought forward at a joint meeting.

Commissioner Short, Member of the Fire Advisory Board, noted that staff has come up with a good initial mapping of fire stations that includes NDF. He stated he would want the closest fire engine to be utilized on a fire, and discussions should be started with everyone on the most cost-effective way to serve the Truckee Meadows for fire prevention. He commented that the Fire Commission has no real authority and is an advisory board for facilitating cooperation between the entities.

Commissioner Galloway stated that maybe the bylaw issue should be dropped and the matter moved to a higher level. He said the issue should be placed on the September joint meeting agenda and Washoe County and City of Reno staff members should come up with a proposal for obtaining public input on how to move toward either a regional district or other alternative.

Chairman Shaw said he would request this issue be placed on the September joint meeting agenda.

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

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**JAMES M. SHAW**, Chairman  
Truckee Meadows Fire  
Protection District

**ATTEST:**

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**AMY HARVEY**, Washoe County Clerk  
and Ex Officio Clerk, Truckee Meadows  
Fire Protection District

*Minutes Prepared By  
Barbara Trow, Deputy County Clerk*