

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

TUESDAY

3:30 p.m.

JANUARY 19, 2010

PRESENT:

**David Humke, Chairman**  
**Bonnie Weber, Vice Chairperson**  
**Bob Larkin, Commissioner**  
**Kitty Jung, Commissioner**  
**John Breternitz, Commissioner**

**Amy Harvey, County Clerk**  
**Katy Simon, County Manager**  
**Melanie Foster, Legal Counsel**  
**Tim Alameda, Interim Fire Chief**

The Board convened at 3:32 p.m. in special session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada, and conducted the following business:

**10-01F        AGENDA ITEM 3**

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

There was no response to the call for public comment.

**10-02F        AGENDA ITEM 4**

**Agenda Subject:** “Update and status report regarding proposed City of Reno Fire Department budget reductions, consider potential impacts and mitigation on District levels of service, and provide possible direction to staff, including direction to review with the Joint Fire Advisory Board, and to consider increasing the frequency of the Joint Fire Advisory Board meetings”

Interim Fire Chief Tim Alameda and Joe DuRousseau, Division Chief, conducted a PowerPoint presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk, highlighting the budget reductions between FY 2008/09 and FY 2009/10, original FY 2009/10 budget assumptions, projected shortfall as of January 8, 2010, reduction in staffing levels, reduction in depth of resources, current staffing plan, apparatus closures, reductions in force in addition to FY 2009/10 shortfall, projected shift strength per day, current daily shift strength with proposed reduction in force and vacancy force,

apparatus/station brown-outs, current daily shift strength with reduction in force and 23 retirements by June 30, 2010 and vacancy factor, how often brown-outs would occur, interlocal language, analysis of revised staffing plan and the SAFER Grant.

In response to a question from Commissioner Jung regarding the Resolution, Tracy Chase, Reno City Attorney, replied a resolution would be required to drop a level of service from any fiscal year and one resolution required per fiscal year. She explained each year the two local governments worked together to create an adopted fire consolidated budget for the next fiscal year. Ms. Chase said it would have to be determined for next fiscal year whether that level of service would be affected as part of the budgetary process. Commissioner Jung said it had been stated that the City of Reno had not yet approved this and asked when that approval would be anticipated. Ms. Chase said the City Council had that on their January 27, 2010 agenda.

Chairman Humke inquired about the SAFER Grant. Chief DuRousseau commented it was the "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response" Grants.

Commissioner Weber questioned in terms of budget reductions did the City of Reno consider public safety the same priority as the County. Katy Simon, County Manager, believed the Reno City Council was aware of the County's approach to budgeting. However, that comment would be passed to the City Council to consider making public safety a higher priority. Chief DuRousseau stated the Fire Department had a 10 percent reduction at the beginning of the year. He said the City Council requested all City departments take a 5 percent reduction, which would equate to 32 staff positions. Commissioner Weber remarked the Board could suggest to the City that public safety be given a higher priority.

Commissioner Weber inquired on the Somerset Fire Station. Chief DuRousseau explained that was contracted with the developer who built the station and provided the apparatus. Commissioner Weber stated she was not in favor of any of the reductions or the brown-outs. She was concerned and noted stations needed to be fully opened at all the outlying locations.

Commissioner Jung asked about the access for the Somerset/Del Webb subdivision. Chief DuRousseau said there were two accesses, one from the east and one from the west by Fourth Street. Commissioner Jung asked how many administrative staff members, such as supervisory staff, were cut from the Fire Department. Chief Alameda replied some positions were not filled. He said to reduce overtime a division chief position was moved to a battalion chief position. Commissioner Jung said it seemed the Department was relying on another fire district as backup to infill for the brown-outs. Chief DuRousseau indicated the back-up for District 9 was Station 13, which was a Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Station. He said Station 7 coverage would come from Engine 3 and Engine 5 and the back-up for Engine 19 was Engine 11. Commissioner Jung asked if the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) would respond. Chief DuRousseau explained there were Automatic Aid agreements in place and added Mutual Aid Agreements were also in place with all the surrounding Fire Departments.

Commissioner Jung asked when there was a reduction in force and brown-outs would it be expected to have more demand for mutual aid. Chief DuRousseau indicated there were calls for service or working fires every day throughout the year and some required mutual aid from surrounding agencies. Commissioner Jung asked what would be the effect in fire fighting when management and staffing changes occurred that included the temporary closing of Truck 11 and Engine 10. Chief DuRousseau replied over the last two years Truck 11 responded to the least number of calls. He said if a fire occurred in that district the next closest truck would respond adding three to four minutes to the response time. He remarked the national standard was for an engine company with four people to be on scene within four to six minutes. Staff would like to see six to nine personnel on scene within nine minutes.

Commissioner Jung asked for clarification between a truck and an engine. Chief DuRousseau explained an engine carried water and hoses and their primary job was to find and extinguish the fire. He said the truck conducted search and rescue, and ventilation. He indicated if fully staffed, multiple jobs could be conducted simultaneously; however, when staffing levels dropped the jobs would still be accomplished, but may be done one after another which could take longer. Commissioner Jung asked if the Sun Valley area would be affected with the brown-outs. Chief DuRousseau said there was a ladder truck stationed in Sun Valley, but they may be affected.

Commissioner Jung asked if the total number of calls and/or types of calls could be manipulated in the computer system since there was no digital footprint. Division Chief Curtis Johnson explained the District had Mobile Computer Terminals (MCT) installed in TMFPD first-out engines, brush engines and training and command vehicles. Commissioner Jung asked for assurance that fire calls and the categorization of fire calls were true data and could not be manipulated without a digital footprint. Chief DuRousseau said the run-reports filed by captains could be manipulated, but the Tiburon data off the computer could not be manipulated. Commissioner Jung stated if the data could not be validated, it was meaningless. Chief Alameda stated staff asked those same questions and was working to resolve those concerns. Commissioner Jung asked what would happen if the Board determined not to sign the resolution. Ms. Chase explained if the resolution was returned the Reno City Council would need to give direction and take into account additional information.

Commissioner Breternitz said Truck 11 and Station 7 would be directly impacted in Commissioner District 1 and he was concerned on the overall impact for fire service in that district. He said it appeared with a 10 percent reduction in the budget there would be a 21.8 percent reduction in resources or services and asked for clarification. Chief Alameda explained there was a reduction in staffing levels or personnel of 19 percent, which would equate to a reduction in apparatus equal to 21 percent. Chief DuRousseau indicated as vacancies occurred, brown-outs would happen and the depth of resources would be impacted. Commissioner Breternitz stated the majority of calls were medical emergencies and asked how that worked when the Fire Department and the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) both responded. Chief

DuRousseau explained the region had a two-tiered system. He said Fire Departments were positioned through-out the community for rapid response to a fire; however, if a medical call came in within the District a unit could be sent to respond. He commented when dispatch received the call and determined it was a medical call within the District, dispatch would send the engine, then immediately call REMSA. He said Fire Departments responded and would arrive on scene to stabilize the patient. Then REMSA would respond to take over patient care and transport. Chief DuRousseau expressed this was a good system because the community received the best level of coverage.

Commissioner Breternitz inquired on the authority that established the two-tiered system since there was an element of duplication. Chief DuRousseau stated it may have arisen between the Fire Department, the Health Department and REMSA, but indicated that system had been in place for a long time. Chief Alameda remarked some of those questions would be answered when the Diamante Study was completed. He explained an all-risk agency responded to everything.

Ms. Simon stated the Health Department Franchise Agreement with REMSA was governed by the District Board of Health. Ms. Chase indicated Appendix A to the interlocal agreement contained an EMS capability stating what was specifically contracted with TMFPD.

Commissioner Larkin asked for clarification concerning the reductions in force. Chief Alameda explained it would be 16 Full-Time Employees (FTE's) throughout the department. Commissioner Larkin said the City of Reno's philosophy was a 5 percent reduction across the board; however, since the Fire Department had taken an earlier reduction that should equate to a 2.5 percent reduction. Chief Alameda agreed. Commissioner Larkin asked what scenario would lead the Department to begin the 72 personnel per shift. Chief DuRousseau explained personnel were not required to sign up for vacations a year in advance, and the numbers could fluctuate around holiday weekends, but would not go below 72 staff level per shift. Commissioner Larkin said some other action would have to be initiated to not go below 72. Chief DuRousseau stated overtime would be initiated, but the overtime budget took the biggest hit over the year. He said the brown-out plan and the original closing of Truck 11 and Engine 10 was to reduce the number of FTE's.

Michele Hobbs, Senior Management Analyst, Reno Fire Department, said the 2010/11 budget was being prepared with the scenario of going to 72 staff members and reviewing the historical numbers to see what was projected for the remainder of the year. She noted overtime would be budgeted beyond the 72 personnel. Commissioner Larkin said 72 members was being targeted and was the target of the Fire Department. Ms. Hobbs said the direction from the Reno City Council was to go to a level of 72 staff, but discussions would still occur for the 15 percent vacancy. Commissioner Larkin stated as the 72 figure was approached the question became where were the resources going to come from. He said he was concerned there would be service level changes on a daily basis that may fall below certain agreed upon service levels. He said the interconnectivity of the system relied upon everyone showing up to work and things working the way they

were contracted. Chief DuRousseau said it depended on where the call was located. He said he shared those concerns because other resources would be pulled from depending where the calls came from.

Commissioner Larkin said according to the service agreement it was at the discretion of the Board of Fire Commissioner's to approve a resolution or not and asked if that was correct. Melanie Foster, Legal Counsel, explained the process required when there was something that could affect the level of service it would be brought to the Board and the Board would act by virtue of a resolution to bless that action on the part of the City of Reno and the Fire District. Commissioner Larkin asked if that was permissive on the part of the Board of Fire Commissioner's. Ms. Foster said she would review the language and return with the opinion.

Ms. Simon indicated the agenda was not styled to execute a resolution and would need a subsequent action and the item agendized.

Chairman Humke asked about the use of volunteers to backfill some of the vacancies or was that prohibited by contract. Chief Alameda replied volunteers were used to backfill into the Districts and the TMFPD. However, with respect to the City of Reno, there were contractual issues and in those issues volunteers would not be used within the City. Chairman Humke said for whatever reason the position was vacant and volunteers could not be used within the City. Chief Alameda stated that was correct within the City. He said volunteers would be used to staff volunteer stations in the District given the City or the District's career stations were involved.

Chairman Humke stated there would be 23 retirements between now and June 30, 2010 and asked what would be the result of those retirements. Chief Alameda indicated those positions would not be filled. Chairman Humke asked if a station was browned-out that was served by a TMFPD station or part of the District, did the Reno City Council have the exclusive authority to make the change in service. Chief DuRousseau replied if a station was not being permanently closed, but was considered for relocation of resources and, such a station had a first response district that lied entirely either within the City or the District, a decision to relocate such resources rested with the party having jurisdiction over the area. He stated for Stations 19 and 7 the City of Reno had jurisdiction, but the TMFPD had jurisdiction over the area affected by Station 13.

Chairman Humke said he saw varied numbers in the way stations were located and engaging the area they covered. He said as a percentage of the total calls the "other calls" varied between 20 percent and 50 percent. Chief Alameda said those calls would be separated more to receive better data. Chairman Humke said the Cities of Reno and Sparks and the County had upgraded their false alarm ordinances and asked how the District managed those calls. Chief DuRousseau said if false alarm calls became repeat calls or an on-going problem the repeat callers would begin to be charged. He reviewed the types of calls that could fall within that category.

In response to an earlier question from Commissioner Larkin, Ms. Foster said “level of service” was a defined term in the agreement and the actual clause said, “the City of Reno agreed that it would not reduce the level of service within the Districts’ boundaries during the fiscal year without the approval by the Board of Fire Commissioners by resolution.” Ms. Foster said the discussion about the reallocation of resources and the closing of a station non-permanently did not fall within the same provision and did not fall within the resolution section. She stated that was separate and those decisions would lie within each board. Ms. Foster said it was the Board’s decision whether the resolution could be approved and needed to show there was a reduction in the level of service.

Commissioner Larkin said proposed was a level of service reduction that also involved a reallocation of resources in an existing station which would be two separate actions. Commissioner Larkin asked Ms. Chase if she agreed that a level of service reduction was being proposed. Ms. Chase said she had not specifically reviewed the ramifications of the brown out of the apparatus next to the jurisdictional line. She believed the jurisdictional line was contracted and the governing bodies at the time intended to maintain those jurisdictional lines regarding level of service provisions. Ms. Chase explained “level of service” meant first response, but did not mean a level of service spreading across the County and including the City. She said the contract was for the TMFPD level of service at their stations and the apparatus to be provided from those stations to the citizens of the Truckee Meadows. Ms. Chase stated the depth of service decision should be left to the Fire Departments since they understood what the incident involved for depth of resources and could make a judgment call based upon incident command systems. She remarked she could not give an opinion whether a level of service had been directly affected by what the City Council was considering, but if that was the case, the City Council wanted the Board to be aware of the situation so input could be provided.

Commissioner Larkin recommended this conversation needed to be brought to the Joint Fire Advisory Board (JFAB) because this was a contract issue and it needed to be determined if a change in the level of service was being proposed. He would request the JFAB seek a written legal opinion.

Commissioner Weber said the response time would be a longer period to some of the locations with the brown-outs. She asked what a current response time was and what would be the new response time. Chief DuRousseau stated the provided maps indicated response times. For example, if there was a fire on Stead Boulevard between Stations 13 and 9, either Station would respond within four minutes. However, if there was a fire on the back corner of Lemmon Drive, Engine 9 would get there within six to eight minutes and Engine 13 would be between nine and twelve minutes. Commissioner Weber felt that was too long and lives and structures could be lost. She stated there was a volunteer fire station in that area that could respond quicker. Chief DuRousseau agreed and said a volunteer station would be paged out, but reminded the Board that volunteers were not always at the station. Commissioner Weber requested City maps be available in the future to indicate where stations were located.

Commissioner Weber remarked the Departments did a great job and knew exactly where to move people and equipment, but regular citizens did not understand all of the circumstances. She felt there was the ability to work with the volunteers so everyone could come together in the best interest of saving lives and structures. Commissioner Weber stated it all lead back to the interlocal agreement and the agreements with the unions.

Commissioner Jung asked who determined when the TMFPD was sent to a medical emergency. Chief DuRousseau said dispatch would send the closet resource to the incident, whether fire or medical. Commissioner Jung asked if the City of Reno had an emergency protocol agreement and did their computers act the same. Chief DuRousseau stated it was all the same dispatch system.

Commissioner Breternitz observed on average there was about a 15 percent vacancy rate. Chief DuRousseau said that was contractual vacancies and accrued time which amounted to about 15 percent. Commissioner Breternitz asked if there was a way to prioritize vacation times. Chief DuRousseau said that could be negotiated. He remarked some firefighters traded shifts with other firefighters to not impact vacations.

Commissioner Larkin moved that the Board accept the update and status report and the questions and answers be forwarded to the JFAB, specifically slide 24, and direct the JFAB to seek a formal legal opinion from both the District Attorney and the City of Reno Attorney. He also directed the JFAB meet monthly through this fiscal year to consider all of the ramifications to the agreement and suggestions and that the JFAB bring those recommendations back to the Board of Fire Commissioners at the next regular meeting of that Board. Commissioner Breternitz seconded the motion.

Kurt Latipow, Fire Service Coordinator, asked for clarification of the questions to be presented to the JFAB. Commissioner Larkin stated if the language recommended on slide 24 of the presentation was altered, because the agreement specifically spoke on reductions and resolutions, for the JFAB to request a legal opinion of both the District Attorney and the City of Reno Attorney if the actual request on slide 24 was a level of service change.

On call for the question the motion passed on a 5 to 0 vote.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**5:31 p.m.** On motion by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried, the meeting was adjourned.

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**DAVID E. HUMKE**, 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:  
Stacy Gonzales, Deputy County Clerk*