

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

TUESDAY

1:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 9, 2014

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

David Humke, Chairman

The Board convened at 1:53 p.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:

14-0160F AGENDA ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENT

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.

14-0161F AGENDA ITEM 3

Agenda Subject: “Consent Items: Authorize the payment of the workers’ compensation insurance for the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District to the Nevada Public Agency Insurance Pool Public Agency Compensation Trust (PACT), for the period of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 for an annual estimated premium of \$1,019,867.”

Commissioner Hartung asked whether the premium expenditure existed in the Fire District’s General Fund budget or the County’s General Fund budget. Fire Chief Charles Moore said it existed in the Fire District’s budget.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 3 be authorized.

14-0162F AGENDA ITEM 4

Agenda Subject: “Fire Chief Report: A) Report and discussion related to fire district operations; B) Monthly Statistics; C) Volunteer Report for months of September and October 2014; D) Recognition of volunteer Service (Ben Hammack).”

Fire Chief Charles Moore showed the Board a YouTube video called “Christmas tree destroys a living room in under a minute”, which he said could be found online. He said the video demonstrated what could happen with holiday decorations and the public needed to be aware of the risks. He urged citizens to exercise caution and suggested giving smoke detectors as holiday gifts.

Chief Moore reported the monthly statistics for October. He said there were four structure fires, which included one caused by a discarded cigarette in a planter box, one caused by a battery charger malfunction and one in a Sun Valley mobile home. He said fire crews did an excellent job.

Chief Moore provided the Board with a 2013 Fire Hydrant Repair Summary, which was placed on file with the Clerk. Commissioner Hartung asked if the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) performed any repair work on hydrants within the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD). Chief Moore said they did not have an agreement with TMWA for that. Commissioner Hartung said it was his understanding that TMWA did more than just flush the hydrants and he wondered if a TMWA representative could come before the Board to talk about what they do. Chief Moore said he thought there were benefits to having the Fire District service their own hydrants. He said the crew was more likely to remember where the hydrants were when responding to nighttime fires, because they would have spent time maintaining them. He pointed out there was specific information on the Fire Hydrant Repair Summary that detailed how the hydrants were serviced. He said the work involved much more than just flushing, but he thought it would be beneficial to have TMWA do the heavy work if something was broken underground. He explained there was a benefit to servicing the hydrants annually because the Insurance Service Office (ISO) gave the District points for that. Commissioner Hartung said he wanted to make sure they were doing what was best for the community and considering any cost savings that could be had.

Commissioner Jung said the issue was about equity because TMWA ratepayers were paying to subsidize and service the fire hydrants in the City of Sparks and nowhere else. She said TMWA should be the lead authority for servicing fire hydrants to allow the TMFPD to concentrate their efforts on training.

Vice Chairperson Weber asked why there was not a volunteer report from Palomino Valley on the Chief's report. Chief Moore explained the volunteers were self-reporting, which he was uncomfortable with because there was no oversight. He said the reports lacked details, including information about the good things the volunteers were doing. He said he would be coming back to the Board in the next month with a presentation regarding changes to volunteer reporting. He explained some of the stations had been struggling with internet connectivity and lack of software training, but the Board could look forward to a more comprehensive look at what the volunteers were doing starting in January 2015.

Vice Chairperson Weber said she talked with Chief Moore about having an event for the volunteer firefighters and asked if plans had been made for that. Chief Moore said that was something to consider for the next budget consideration. He said the volunteers put in a lot of hours and it was his goal to recognize that; however, his primary goal was to get the volunteer reporting issue resolved because it was critical from a risk management standpoint. Vice Chairperson Weber expressed disappointment that there were not yet plans for a volunteer event.

Commissioner Hartung expressed concerns about the disparity in the volunteer hours reported by each station. Chief Moore said he was concerned too. He had been working very hard to get documentation from the different volunteer departments regarding certifications, physicals, etc. and it was taking months to compile that information. He said the problem was that there were nine autonomous fire stations to deal with and they all had their own Chiefs and culture, so it was hard to get them all to do the same thing. He talked about a volunteer handbook, which was created for the purpose of getting all the volunteer firefighters on the same page, but the volunteers expressed to him that the handbook was "wholly unacceptable". He said his purpose was not to outline all the problems he was encountering, but to inform the Board that he would be bringing forward a program for volunteer reform in January.

Commissioner Hartung asked about the status of five Wadsworth volunteer applications which were submitted; however, there had been an assertion that there had been no response to them. He also asked about the status of the proposed agreement with the Pyramid Lake Tribal Fire Department. He said questions had been raised about whether the agreement would change if there was a change in Tribal leadership. Chief Moore said the agreement with the Pyramid Lake Fire Department needed to be established before they brought the volunteers on board. He stated the volunteers would be brought on as Pyramid Lake Fire Department volunteers rather than TMFPD volunteers because Pyramid Lake was not bound by State Statute, which meant the volunteers could be on the job much faster. He explained TMFPD volunteers were required to undergo physicals and have background checks, which took more time to complete. He noted when there was a fire in Wadsworth the crew had to go all the way to Nixon to get equipment before heading back to respond. He said if the County gave the Pyramid Lake Fire Department the ability to operate out of the Wadsworth station, they could put their fire engine there in exchange for providing automatic aid. He also

proposed to give them an old fire tender and an old patrol truck so they would have more equipment.

Commissioner Hartung said the Board was sensitive to the needs in Wadsworth and understood the necessity to provide the area with service and mutual aid. He said there were complaints that the TMFPD was not calling on the closest fire station in response to calls. Chief Moore said he made it very clear to his staff that it was imperative to dispatch the TMFPD as well as the fire departments in Storey County, Pyramid Lake and north Lyon County to any structure fires in Wadsworth and he instructed his chief officers to verify that was done by contacting dispatch.

Commissioner Hartung asked if the Tribal volunteers had any medical capabilities. Chief Moore replied that quite a few of the volunteers were Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and they had a transport ambulance as well. Commissioner Hartung talked about the possibility of working out an agreement with Regional Emergency Medical Services (REMSA) based on who could respond more quickly. Chief Moore said he could only recall one structure fire in Wadsworth within the last three years. He said every other call had been an emergency medical request and he wondered where REMSA would be responding from if they were to send an ambulance to Wadsworth.

Commissioner Jung said she wholeheartedly supported volunteer reform and thought that volunteers who could not demonstrate they were physically capable of the job created a liability for the County. She said she looked forward to Chief Moore's reform plans and asked him to keep the Board informed about who was cooperating and who was not. Chief Moore said a successful volunteer program would be one where the volunteers were trained and where all the risk management issues had been addressed. He said he wanted to ensure that his staff and the volunteers were on the same page with respect to capability, which was a difficult task. He said the volunteers did not lack for enthusiasm or passion to serve the public; however, they needed to know there were non-negotiable things that had to be accomplished to the satisfaction of the training captains. He said his purpose was to help them succeed.

Vice Chairperson Weber stated she would like the volunteer report to show a station as active or inactive so the Board would know if missing data was an issue or not. Chief Moore replied that was why he proposed to have his staff generate the reports. He said the volunteers would only need to put the information into a database, which would allow him to generate any kind of report the Board wanted.

Commissioner Hartung asked Chief Moore for a timeframe for the agreement with the Tribe. Chief Moore said he had an agreement drafted but needed to sit down with the Deputy District Attorney to go over it. He noted there were insurance ramifications to consider, but estimated a draft of the agreement would be completed by the end of December and ready to present to the Board in January.

Chief Moore said he wanted to recognize Ben Hammack who put in over 15 years of volunteer service. He had a Certificate of Appreciation to present to Mr. Hammack; however, he was not present to receive it.

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

14-0163F AGENDA ITEM 5

Agenda Subject: “Review and Acceptance of the Sierra Fire Protection District's Audited Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2014.”

Vicky Van Buren, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Senior Accountant, said the Sierra Fire Protection District's (SFPD) financial statements were audited by Kafoury, Armstrong & Co. She reported that the auditors found the District conformed to all significant statutory constraints on its financial administration during the year and there were no audit deficiencies or audit points noted. She went over some of the highlights of the report and said the balance of the General Fund as of June 30, 2014 was \$1,300,497, which was a decrease of approximately \$186,000 from the prior year due to one-time purchases of capital assets. She said the fund balance equated to approximately two months of expenditures. She reported the total General Fund expenditures were \$7,763,068, of which approximately \$5.8 million was for payment to the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) for fire administration and operations. She said the total expenditures were under budget by approximately \$198,000 and the General Fund revenues and other sources were over budget by \$66,859. She talked about the Wildland Fire Emergency Fund and reported its balance was 870,386. She said the SFPD was financially sound as of June 30, 2014 and was projected to be stable over the next fiscal year. She said the recommendation to the Board was to accept the financial statements.

Commissioner Hartung asked Fire Chief Moore when the two fire districts would be combined. Chief Moore said the process was in place but it was difficult with respect to compliance with the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS). He said there were some other sensitive issues to consider as well. Commissioner Hartung stated he would like to see one financial report rather than two.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be accepted.

14-0164F AGENDA ITEM 6

Agenda Subject: “Review and Acceptance of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District's Audited Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2014.”

Vicky Van Buren, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Senior Accountant, said the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District's (TMFPD) financial statements were audited by Kafoury, Armstrong & Co. She reported that the auditors found the District conformed to all significant statutory constraints on its financial administration during the year and there were no audit deficiencies or audit points noted. She talked about some of the highlights of the financial statements stating that the General Fund expenditures for fiscal year 2013-14 were approximately \$19.4 million, which was under budget by approximately \$2.8 million. She said the savings were due to a delay in hiring, non-use of the Contingency Fund and decreases in spending for services and supplies. She said the savings were anticipated and therefore built into the budget for the current fiscal year's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). She reported the District's fund balance for fiscal year 2013-14 was \$10.3 million, which was an increase of \$410,507 from the prior year. She said General Fund revenues were above budget by approximately \$639,000, which was primarily due to an increase in property taxes and consolidated tax revenue. She said the Capital Projects Fund had a balance of \$3,329,172, which would be carried over to the current year's CIP for the purchase of equipment, building improvements and construction projects. She said the Wildland Fire Operations Fund had a balance of \$771,851 and the Workers Compensation Fund ended with a balance of \$3.4 million. She reported the Stabilization Fund had a balance of \$573,198 which was consistent with prior years and used for declines in revenues or emergencies. She said the Health Benefits Internal Service Fund had a net restricted position of \$1.7 million. She concluded that the TMFPD was financially sound and was projected to be stable over the upcoming fiscal year. She said the recommendation to the Board was to accept the financial statements.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 6 be accepted.

14-0165F AGENDA ITEM 7

Agenda Subject: "Discussion and approval to initiate de-annexation from the City of Reno APN 038-800-11, known as Truckee Meadows Fire Station #35 and include the area into the boundary of Sierra Fire Protection District."

Fire Chief Charles Moore explained that fire station #35 (Mogul) was owned by the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) but was located within the boundaries of the Sierra Fire Protection District. He said this item was a recommendation to initiate the de-annexation of the parcel from the City of Reno. He said there would be no tax implications for Reno or any fiscal impacts to the TMFPD and it would put the asset within the boundaries of the Board of Fire Commissioners' jurisdiction.

Commissioner Berkbigler asked Chief Moore if there were any issues with road access since the parcel was in the City of Reno. Chief Moore said there were none.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 7 be approved.

14-0166F AGENDA ITEM 8

Agenda Subject: “Discussion and possible action authorizing the Chairman to execute an Agreement between Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and LP Insurance Services, Inc. to provide Group Insurance Broker and Advisory Services effective January 1, 2015 as outlined in the Agreement.”

Fire Chief Charles Moore reminded the Board that they authorized the termination of the brokerage service agreement with Wells Fargo. He said he was bringing forward this new agreement with LP Insurances Services, Inc. to help the District shop for health insurance renewal.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 8 be authorized.

14-0167F AGENDA ITEM 9

Agenda Subject: “Recommendation to direct District Staff to license and equip an ambulance for the purpose of providing Advanced Life Support transport services to other entities during declared emergencies and authorize staff to negotiate mutual aid with REMSA.”

Fire Chief Charles Moore explained this item was requested by Chairman Humke. He said the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) owned an ambulance which was not being used. He thought it was worthy of consideration to equip and license the ambulance, for a cost of approximately \$5,000, so that it could be used as a transport resource in times of catastrophe. He informed the Board the County’s regional partners in the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, the Carson City Fire Department, Storey County, north Lyon County and Pyramid Lake all had the ability to respond with ambulances within their jurisdictions. He said the TMFPD had no intention of encroaching on Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority’s (REMSA) franchise agreement with the County, but he was seeking Board authorization to negotiate with REMSA to make the ambulance available as a mutual aid resource. He said the ambulance would not be used without REMSA’s consent and that it made sense

to have an additional resource for times when REMSA ran out of resources or could not respond in a timely way. He said the TMFPD did not intend to charge for transport services and he expected the ambulance to be called in to service only on very rare occasions. He said the TMFPD already had advanced life support paramedics and licensing the ambulance with the State would be fairly easy to do.

Commissioner Berkgigler said she was a REMSA proponent and in anticipation of this agenda item she had a conversation with REMSA's President to discuss concerns. She said she recognized the fact that REMSA had exclusive transportation rights. She needed the assurance that the TMFPD would not try to bypass the authority of REMSA and that the ambulance would only be used in emergency situations when REMSA called for mutual aid.

Chief Moore reassured the Board that if they authorized him to negotiate with REMSA, the terms would not include any authority for the TMFPD to self-dispatch the ambulance. He said he was hopeful he could establish trigger points with REMSA as to when the resource could be called into action. He emphatically stated the TMFPD was not trying to elbow its way into the transport business. He said the intention was only to provide an additional resource for use in a disaster situation or in times when REMSA was very busy or unable to respond in a timely way.

Commissioner Jung asked Chief Moore how the ambulance would be staffed. Chief Moore said it would be staffed with the crew at Fire Station #30 (Bowers). Commissioner Jung asked if that meant the fire engine at that station would go out of service when the crew was utilizing the ambulance. Chief Moore said that was correct, but there were things they could do to fill in the gaps, by moving other staff or engines around during those times. He commented the impact to the station would be the same whether the fire engine was committed to a call or the ambulance responded, so he did not think it would be a detriment to the station to simply get the patient to the hospital a little faster. Commissioner Jung said she wanted to hear from Health Department staff since that department was the overseer of the contract with REMSA.

Commissioner Hartung said he wondered if placing the ambulance at Fire Station #30 (Bowers) was the best strategic location. He thought the additional resource would be a real benefit for use in times of disaster and if one more life was saved because of it, it was worth it. He wondered if REMSA had ever called for aid from any other regional resources.

Jim Gubbels, REMSA President, stated REMSA did have mutual aid agreements with other Advanced Life Support (ALS) services, which were utilized for life threatening calls. He said there was a new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Advisory Board and pointed out that John Slaughter, County Manager, was on that Board. He said even when REMSA called for mutual aid they still dispatched a resource out to the call, just like the TMFPD did. Commissioner Hartung said he wanted to be sure they were moving forward in a spirit of cooperation and the idea was to ensure every single piece of equipment would be available when there was the need for it.

Chief Moore said he wanted to respond to Commissioner Hartung's question about whether Fire Station #30 (Bowers) was the best location for the ambulance. He said that station had the lowest frequency of emergency calls, so it was very unlikely there would be a simultaneous call for service. Commissioner Hartung said his biggest fear about that location was the response time would not be any better than REMSA's. Chief Moore responded most of the delays seemed to occur in the South, so it seemed logical to him to base it there.

Vice Chairperson Weber said she thought it could only help to have the additional resource as long as the process was worked out in the correct manner.

Christina Conti, Emergency Medical Services Program Manager, read a statement which was prepared by Kevin Dick, District Health Officer. The statement did not support the Fire Board making a decision regarding the licensing of the ambulance. The reasons cited included the fact that there had not been any analysis or evaluations conducted by the new Regional EMS Advisory Oversight Program, which was not in keeping with the regional Interlocal Agreement.

Commissioner Hartung said he understood the position of the Health Board as it related to the kinds of emergency issues that came up on a daily basis, but he was concerned about the response to larger emergencies, such as what happened at the air races. He wanted to know why the Health Board did not support having one more ambulance in the system. Ms. Conti said she was not able to respond to that question; however, she said she was part of the response to that specific incident and it was not her impression there were not enough ambulances for that event.

Commissioner Jung said she thought Mr. Dick was not opposed to the proposal, but wanted it to move through the proper channels to ensure it was the best use of the resource.

Mr. Gubbels talked about the Interlocal Agreement that was formed between Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, the Health Department and REMSA to form the Regional EMS Advisory Board. He said there had been criticism that the region did not have enough data, so the agreement provided for the sharing of data between the jurisdictions. He said the data needed to be looked at and analyzed before decisions were made. He said the TMFPD's primary mission was to fight fires and his concern was that Chief Moore did not have a conversation with him about the idea before bringing it to the Board.

In response to the call for public comment, Robert Parker said there was a real problem with transparency and he thought the response to the air race incident was a perfect example of not having enough resources. He also talked about a fire in Galena where people were hurt and only the Fire Department came to help. He said the problem was that the response system was designed by a private contractor.

Thomas Daly said non-REMSA units treated and transported victims of the air race disaster and the outcome would have been worse without those extra resources. He said there was no downside to having another ambulance since the County already had trained paramedics and a vehicle.

Commissioner Hartung moved to direct staff to license and equip an ambulance for the purpose of providing advanced life support transport services during declared emergencies and to authorize staff to offer the ambulance as a mutual aid resource to REMSA and other regional agencies. Commissioner Jung seconded the motion.

Commissioner Jung asked Chief Moore if he would seek an agreement through the Regional EMS Advisory Board if he were given the authority for the cash outlay to equip and license the ambulance. She said if he did not get anywhere with those efforts he should talk with the elected officials who oversaw that Board.

Chief Moore confirmed his intentions. He said his duty was to report to the Fire Commissioners, not the Regional EMS Advisory Board and he explained he brought the agenda item to the Board in response to a specific request from a Commissioner. He said it was not his intention to ruffle any feathers.

Commissioner Berkbigler said she supported the motion and trusted Chief Moore to continue to work with the Oversight Committee to secure an agreement which would protect the County's legal interests. She said she did not think it would hurt to have one more ambulance to be used in the case of an emergency. She said it would be important for the Chief to ensure his paramedics were well trained and she commended him for doing a great job.

Commissioner Hartung said he recognized feathers were being ruffled. He said this item was not about competing with REMSA, but about putting systems in place so the County could be prepared for any sort of natural disaster.

Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel, said he thought he heard a safeguard in Commissioner Hartung's motion, that the ambulance would only be used in a declared emergency or pursuant to a mutual aid agreement with other emergency transport providers like REMSA. He said the District Attorney's Office had some concerns about the exclusivity of REMSA's franchise agreement, but if the transport services were provided only through a mutual aid agreement to which REMSA was a party, he could not discern any legal problems. He said before the ambulance could be used in any way, REMSA would have to be involved in that conversation.

On call for the question, the vote was 4-0 with Chairman Humke absent.

14-0168F AGENDA ITEM 10

Agenda Subject: “Possible Closed Session for the purpose of discussing labor issues with Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District per NRS 288.220.”

There was no need for a closed session.

14-0169F AGENDA ITEM 11

Agenda Subject: “Commissioners’/Fire Chief’s announcements, requests for information, topics for future agendas, and statements relating to items not on the Agenda. (No discussion among Commissioners will take place on this item).”

Fire Chief Charles Moore thanked Chairman Humke and Commissioner Weber for all they had done to advance the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District’s (TMFPD) mission. Commissioner Weber said it had been a pleasure.

Commissioner Hartung talked about a 1994 agreement with REMSA in which REMSA asked for a 5.3 percent increase in rates to staff a full-time ambulance in Wadsworth. He asked staff to review the agreement to determine its depth and whether or not it was still in force. Chief Moore said he would do that.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

14-0170F AGENDA ITEM 12

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.

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3:59 p.m. There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned without opposition.

CHAIR

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:
Cathy Smith, Deputy County Clerk*