

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (TMFPD)
SIERRA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (SFPD)**

TUESDAY

9:00 a.m.

OCTOBER 20, 2015

PRESENT:

Marsha Berkbigler, Chair
Kitty Jung, Vice Chair
Vaughn Hartung, Commissioner*
Jeanne Herman, Commissioner
Bob Lucey, Commissioner

Nancy Parent, County Clerk
Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel
Charles Moore, Fire Chief

The Board convened at 9:00 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:

15-0165F AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

Ian Satterfield presented firefighter helmets to the Commissioners. He thanked the Board for their support of the Fire Ops 101 event. He stated they were planning a Fire Ops event for 2016.

15-0166F CONSENT ITEMS 4A through 4B

A. Approval of minutes from the September Meetings.

B. Discussion and possible approval of an amendment updating rate schedules in Automatic Aid Agreement between Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and the City of Reno Fire Department.

There was no public comment on the Consent Agenda.

On motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Hartung absent, it was ordered that the Consent Agenda Items 4A through 4B be approved. Any and all Resolutions or Interlocal Agreements pertinent to Consent Agenda Items 4A through 4B are attached hereto and made a part hereof.

15-0167F **AGENDA ITEM 5** Presentation by the National Weather Service on fire weather outlook.

Zach Tolby from the National Weather Service in Reno conducted a PowerPoint presentation regarding the outlook of the 2015 fall and winter, which was placed on file with the Clerk. He said the fire weather could be of concern if there were extended periods with little to no rainfall. He stated they were expecting a strong El Nino, which could decrease the chance of a dry winter. He indicated the forecast slightly favored above average precipitation, especially in mid-to-late winter. He also stated the snow levels could be above the long-term averages for the season.

Commissioner Jung questioned how El Nino would affect the snowpack. Mr. Tolby stated that with the above average temperatures, the snowpack could go either way, meaning there could be above average precipitation but not as much snowpack. He said this region was difficult to predict.

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

15-0168F **AGENDA ITEM 6** Fire Chief Report. A. Report and discussion related to fire district operations; B. Career Statistics' and Report for August and September 2015; C. Volunteer Statistics' and Report for August and September 2015.

Chief Charles Moore stated open burning would start October 22nd. He said it was important for residents to be able to burn their excess sagebrush and debris to create defensible space.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Fire Marshall Amy Ray stated open burning would be from October 22nd to October 31st, noting that burn restrictions would go into effect on November 1st. She said residents could go to the TMFPD website to print an open burning permit. She indicated open burning was only allowed from sunrise to 2:00 p.m. with no smoke showing after 3:00 p.m.

Chief Moore stated he met with Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful (KTMB) regarding Christmas tree recycling. He indicated the KTMB goal was to keep people from dumping Christmas trees along the roads. He said that last year a large amount of media attention focused on "goat grazers", which were Chief Vince Thomas' herd of goats that chewed some of the trees down to the branches. He stated the TMFPD stations would have drop-off locations for Christmas trees after the season and would provide the in-kind services for delivering the trees to the "goat grazers" and the regional parks to be mulched. He said they would ask for a donation to drop off a tree and the proceeds would go to KTMB.

Chief Moore recapped the Wild Fire Season Burned Acreage Summary. He stated the early season precipitation accounted for a great deal of growth, but in July and August it dried out and created a concern for substantial fires, which did not

manifest. He stated throughout the season the TMFPD responded to approximately 300 acres that burned, which he compared to the almost 43,000 acres that burned in the overall State. He was proud of the low incidences of wild fires in the region.

Chief Moore was pleased to announce the arrival of a new type-one fire engine and a new brush engine for the Spanish Springs station. He indicated the Sun Valley station also received the same type engines earlier in the summer. He said they expected to purchase two new water tenders before the end of the fiscal year.

***9:25 a.m.** Commissioner Hartung arrived.

15-0169F **AGENDA ITEM 7** Accept a Special Fund Grant [not to exceed \$16,000] from Washoe County in support of purchasing a Chest Compression System to be utilized at Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Station 17, located at 500 Rockwell Blvd., Sparks, NV and to direct finance to make appropriate budget changes.

Chief Moore indicated the new machine would perform automatic chest compressions on cardiac arrest victims and would allow rescue staff time to attend to other needs of the victims. He stated if the crew's evaluations of the machine proved favorable, the fiscal budget recommendations for next year would include additional machines. He thanked Commissioner Hartung for his donation.

Chair Berkbigler thanked Commissioner Hartung for the donation.

Commissioner Hartung thanked Commissioner Lucey for allowing him to travel to the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Conference in Washington DC to observe the machine in action. He questioned how long it would take to receive the machine and for it to be operational. Chief Moore indicated it would be approximately 45 days. Commissioner Hartung stated it would be beneficial to place the machine in Spanish Springs because of their response times. He stated he experienced performing compressions at Fire Ops 101 and said it was difficult and exhausting. He hoped there were grants they could obtain to purchase additional machines.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Commissioner Lucey, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 7 be accepted and directed.

15-0170F **AGENDA ITEM 8** Approve a Lease Agreement between Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company for the warehouse facility located at 1315 Greg Street, Suite 105, Sparks, NV for a term of thirty-seven (37) months, subject to a Funding Out Clause, for a total lease amount of \$179,712.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Fire Chief Charles Moore asked for this item to be postponed until the November 17th meeting.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Lucey seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 8 be postponed until the November 17, 2015 meeting.

9:32 a.m. The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened solely as the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Sierra Fire Protection District for the following item.

15-0171F **AGENDA ITEM 9** Discussion and possible approval of a notice to cancel all contracts with the volunteer 501(c)(3) organizations to include Cold Springs, Galena, Peavine, Verdi, and South Valley and authorize the Fire Chief to implement the cancellation of contracts.

Chief Moore stated that before he was hired as Fire Chief, studies were conducted which identified how the volunteer organization was structured. He said the current structure included eight autonomous volunteer agencies that existed with their own Board of Directors, their own bylaws, their own protocols and in some cases their own stations. He indicated the recommendation would be to consolidate the management structure to be more centralized so the entire volunteer program would be under the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD). He said it had been a difficult task to get all of the departments aligned. He noted the Blue Ribbon Committee also studied this issue and he quoted their report which stated, "Volunteers should not be separate and autonomous; volunteers are a key component of emergency services in several areas where insufficient tax base exists to support career staff. That will continue to be true in a regional model as well. However, volunteer organizations in Washoe County are fragmented and inefficient on many levels and are in need of reform. Response, training and activity records and other critical documentation are either missing or inadequate. Problems with span of control exist in the current system and volunteers do not live within a reasonable distance of their stations. These issues were also raised in the *Standards of Cover* published in 2001." He noted the written agreements with the volunteer organizations expired many years ago, but they continued to operate as usual. He said if the Board approved this item, the process would be to give the volunteers a 60-day notice, which would mean the 501(c)(3) would no longer have the authority to administer each individual agency. He stated the TMFPD would administer a set of policies and best practices and would continue to operate as they were now. He indicated they needed to assess each of the stations, the equipment and the call response needs. He said the need for volunteers would not change. He stated in early 2016, the TMFPD would be the master organization and would take charge over the appointment of volunteer station managers, recruiting, issuance of policies, the quantity and quality of training and the managing of the entire volunteer operation. He said there would be an organization of volunteers in the south and an organization of volunteers in the north. He

stated the volunteers needed to be aligned to train together, to know each other's equipment, and to be familiar each other. He said if the Board approved this request, they would reorganize with new administration and management.

Commissioner Hartung stated training could take as little as six hours and as much to 124 hours. He asked about the changes that would be instituted to ensure consistency and teamwork. Chief Moore stated it would greatly enhance the sense of teamwork within the volunteers because they would be training and interfacing with each other. He noted the volunteer training statistics were reviewed a short time ago and it was discovered that out of 156 active volunteers only 26 had all of their training completed. He thought that having the volunteers under one management group would increase communication and ensure compliance. He indicated there were volunteer departments that were not completing the required monthly reports, which made it difficult for him to report accurate volunteer activity. He talked about the Lemmon Valley volunteers and explained that since he had not heard from them for a year, he had to step in and move the Peavine volunteers to the Lemmon Valley station in order to keep the station active. He stated volunteers were very important in Lemmon Valley because of the rural location. He stated that every volunteer would be expected to complete the industry standard training and gain the skill sets required to respond to calls in a capable manner. Commissioner Hartung questioned what the scope of liability was if volunteers who were not properly trained entered a burning building and were injured. Chief Moore replied it was very high. He said if a career or volunteer firefighter was severely injured or worse, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) would review the records. If the responders did not meet the industry standard for training, the TMFPD would be fined. He indicated the severity the injury would dictate the size of the fine. He said, aside from the risk, what was more important was that the volunteers were safe and capable. He stated the culture was going to change over the next few years and some of the volunteers would not like the change, but many were excited about existing as one master volunteer organization. He said the strategy for Red Rock and Gerlach was to staff the stations with volunteers to protect the rural areas where they could not afford to staff with career firefighters. Commissioner Hartung asked how it would affect Wadsworth and if there would be group training with Wadsworth. Chief Moore stated it would not affect them because there was an interlocal agreement in place that stated they would be trained by the TMFPD. He said they continued to work with the tribe to make their department work more effectively.

Commissioner Lucey was concerned about Washoe Valley. The volunteers played a key role in the Washoe Valley and he said they had been very involved with training over the years. He noted there was concern about the cancellation of the 501(c)(3) and the agreements and he wondered if the volunteers would still be able to respond to type-one calls.

Chief Moore stated that in the current system, the volunteers were called to all of the 8000 calls from Cold Springs to Wadsworth and from north to south. He said it was a complicated process to call volunteers and career firefighters and it slowed down the process. He stated one of the things he wanted to review was the where, why and

when the volunteers needed to be called to respond. He did not feel it was necessary to call volunteers system wide, except in Gerlach and Red Rock, to every single medical call because career firefighters and the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (RESMA) would be there. He said he had talked to South Valley volunteers but he was not convinced they needed to be called for every call. He would review the dispatch process to see if there was a way to simplify the notifications.

Commissioner Lucey thought this was a step in the right direction. He felt the uniformity and cohesiveness between the volunteer departments would make the next evolution of the region easier. He wanted conversations to continue and to make sure that as they moved through the process, the volunteers had a voice.

Commissioner Herman said she was concerned because most of the areas they were talking about were in her district. She wanted to know what the plan was for the future of the Palomino Valley station. Chief Moore stated this would not affect Palomino Valley because they were not governed by a 501(c)(3). He said what he was concerned about in Palomino Valley was that many volunteers had left. He stated he wanted to understand what was happening out there because he needed to get those volunteers back to make the organization better. He wanted to assure the volunteers that his intentions were to make them better firefighters, not to shut them down.

On the call for public comment, Debbie Sheltra stated she was concerned that the consolidation with the TMFPD would change the way volunteers were called out to emergencies in Washoe Valley. She said she feared the career firefighters would be too far away to respond in a timely manner and she was unsure if the volunteers would be called out for each incident. She stated the volunteers should be notified when there was some activity going on so they could be ready to respond.

Robert Shaw, Captain for South Valley Fire Department, thanked the volunteer firefighters. He did not agree with negative comments that were made concerning the lack of training amongst the volunteers. He noted he had been a volunteer for 25 years and always trained and worked hard in order to protect his community and department. He said there were many volunteers who were very dedicated and he asked the Board to consider the volunteers and the commitment they had made to the community.

Gregory Fleischer expressed his concerns about the consolidation of the volunteer departments with the TMFPD. He thought the consolidation would diminish the volunteers and that improvements could be made without the consolidation. He noted many people in the community relied on the volunteers to be the first responders. He said his neighbor had a stroke a short time ago and he feared if the neighbor had more medical emergencies, the volunteers would not be notified. He stated his biggest concern was if the TMFPD took over the volunteer service, the volunteers would diminish leaving people unprotected.

Joe Parrott, Consultant with Emergency Services Consulting, International, said the current organizational structure of the volunteer program was inefficient, ineffective and created a significant liability for the County and the TMFPD. He indicated that Chief Moore asked him to help with a detailed transition plan. He spoke in favor of moving forward. He said this was an important first step for Chief Moore and he felt they were on the right path.

Sara Chvilicek spoke in favor of the consolidation between the volunteer program and the TMFPD. She said the Blue Ribbon Committee recommendation was to assimilate all the volunteer fire departments into the TMFPD. She said a consolidation would improve the overall system including enhanced reliability and performance. She noted this was a good move.

Cindy Davis said she was a member of the Blue Ribbon Committee and lived in an area where automatic aid was not an option. She spoke regarding organizational structure, regionalization and change. She stated her background was in Human Resource Management and she could not imagine the difficult position Chief Moore was in trying to keep the volunteer program together. She understood that employees did not like to hear that there were issues with training or safety compliance. She thought the individuals who were compliant should be recognized and the individuals who were not, should be mentored.

Commissioner Jung stated that the *Standards of Cover* study was received in 2011 before Chief Moore was hired. She indicated the frustration of the separation between the volunteers and the TMFPD had been going on for many years. She noted the direction given to Chief Moore when he was hired was to improve the volunteer program and bring it up to standard to ensure that the County's liability would be diminished, and that accountability and reliability would be improved. She stated this would give Chief Moore oversight, standardized training, accountability, reliability and everything needed to make a far better volunteer firefighter program. She said it would also allow young people to use it as a way to move towards a professional career.

On motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Herman voting "no", it was ordered that Agenda Item 9 be approved and authorized.

10:17 a.m. The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened solely as the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District for the following item.

15-0172F **AGENDA ITEM 10** Discussion and possible approval of a notice to cancel all contracts with the volunteer 501(c)(3) organizations to include Cold Springs, Lemmon Valley, Palomino Valley, Silver Lake and South Valley and authorize the Fire Chief to implement the cancellation of contracts.

On the call for public comment, Michael Langton, South Valley Volunteers, was concerned that the volunteer services were going to be disbanded, but stated after he heard all the comments, he was confident the changes would be for the best.

John Howe spoke regarding the Silver Lake Volunteer Fire Department and the many things they did in the community to raise money and fire awareness. He stated the neighbors appreciated the way they were currently structured and there was no need to change. He submitted a handout which was placed on file with the Clerk.

Commissioner Hartung stated he was never a volunteer firefighter, but had been a volunteer in his community for many years and he thought the proposed changes were positive. He stated he saw this as a true benefit for the volunteers and the County.

On motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Herman voting “no”, it was ordered that Agenda Item 10 be approved and authorized.

15-0173F **AGENDA ITEM 11** 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).

Chief Moore had no announcements.

Commissioner Jung stated there were four students from the Mountain View Montessori School present and she noted there would be more students attending future meetings as part of a leadership program at their school.

Commissioner Lucey thanked the Arrowcreek Fire Station for responding to an emergency at his grandmother’s home. He said they transported her to the hospital and thought they were going to lose her, but they were able to get her to the hospital soon enough to save her.

Commissioner Herman offered her assistance to Chief Moore.

Commissioner Hartung thanked the Truckee Meadows Firefighters Association, IAFF Local 3895, for the firefighter helmet and shared that he had a great time at Fire Ops 101.

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

15-0174F **AGENDA ITEM 12** Public Comment.

Jeff Church spoke about his concerns regarding volunteer mediation, fire issues, mental illness and security issues.

Cathy Brandhorst spoke about matters of concern to herself.

* * * * * * * * * *

10:41 a.m. There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Commissioner Lucey, which motion duly carried, the meeting was adjourned.

MARSHA BERKBIGLER, 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:
Doni Gassaway, Deputy County Clerk