

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

TUESDAY

9:00 a.m.

DECEMBER 18, 2018

PRESENT:

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

Nancy Parent, County Clerk
Charles Moore, Fire Chief
Paul Lipparelli, Assistant District Attorney

ABSENT:

Vaughn Hartung, Commissioner

The Board convened at 9:09 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:

18-201F **AGENDA ITEM 3** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

18-202F **AGENDA ITEM 4** Announcements/Reports.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore announced no representative for the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 2487 was in attendance so Agenda Item 7 would not be needed. He also requested hearing Agenda Items 9 and 10 after the Consent Agenda to allow his staff time to prepare for a meeting.

Commissioner Jung mentioned six Labrador puppies rescued by the District and Chief Moore indicated they were referred to Washoe County Animal Services, who had received a number of inquiries about adoption. Commissioner Jung praised the District and Public Information Officer Adam Mayberry for publicizing the event as it made national news. She thanked the firefighters responsible for the rescue.

CONSENT ITEMS – 5A and 5B

18-203F **5A** Recommendation to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2018 and the November 27, 2018 meeting.

18-204F **5B** Recommendation to accept a donation in the amount of \$100.00 from Washoe County Resident Michael L. Smith in support of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Station 33 A-Shift Staff and express appreciation for the thoughtful contribution. (All Commission Districts)

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Commissioner Herman, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Commissioner Hartung absent, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 5A and 5B be approved.

18-205F **AGENDA ITEM 9** Recommendation to authorize Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District to pay Workers' Compensation Heart and Lung Claims invoice dated October 22, 2018 from the City of Reno in the amount, not to exceed \$40,343.75 per the Reno-TMFPD Interlocal Agreement, subject to review by our independent actuary. (All Commission Districts)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Commissioner Hartung absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 9 be authorized.

18-206F **AGENDA ITEM 10** Recommendation to accept Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District's Audited Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2018 as presented; approve the re-appropriation of \$1,818,267.53 for the fiscal year 2019 budget, consisting of \$36,673.75 in the General Fund and \$1,781,593.78 in the Capital Projects Fund for purchase order encumbrances committed in fiscal year 2018 and authorize the District to proceed with distribution of the Financial Statements for public record, as required by law. (All Commission Districts)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore noted Eide Bailly representative Dan Carter and TMFPD Chief Fiscal Officer Cindy Vance were both present to answer questions.

Commissioner Jung sought confirmation there were no significant findings or corrections in the audit, which was given by Mr. Carter.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Commissioner Lucey, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Commissioner Hartung absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 10 be accepted, approved, and authorized.

18-207F **AGENDA ITEM 6** Presentation of winter weather forecast by Reno NWS Meteorologist Chris Smallcomb.

National Weather Service (NWS) meteorologist Chris Smallcomb conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk, and reviewed slides with the following titles: Winter 2018-19; How's the Winter Snowpack Starting Off?; Compared to Water Years 2018 and 2017??; Recent Winters; Are Western Nevada Falls Getting Drier, and Springs Trending Wetter? (2 slides); El Niño (4 slides); Hazard Focus Off-Season Wildfire; Hazard Focus Post Wildfire Debris Flow & Flash Flooding; Least Predictable Snow Hazards; and NEW – Snow Squall Warning.

Mr. Smallcomb, recalling the small amount of snow that fell two weeks prior, pointed out it did not take a big winter to cause mayhem. He said smaller storms were less predictable, making it harder to provide adequate warning to agencies like the Nevada Department of Transportation.

Mr. Smallcomb explained the snowpack numbers in the presentation were aggregate totals for the Truckee/Tahoe pass region of the Sierra Mountains. 2018's totals were right around average despite a recent leveling off of the snowpack level. He stated the totals were around where they were in 2016, though he cautioned that did not imply it would be as harsh as that winter was. He noted that, while the temperatures in the northern Nevada area had been hotter over the prior six years, the precipitation was widely variable from year to year. This was normal for that area.

Referencing two charts in the presentation showing decades of data, Mr. Smallcomb remarked there were no trends in the fall precipitation, but springs in general had gotten wetter. He said those storms were warmer, producing more rain and less snow. This impacted fires by causing the grass crop to be more prolific, which lead to busier fire seasons due to the abundant grassy fuels in western Nevada. Winter precipitation had a greater impact in the mountains. He warned the area could see more grass fires if that trend was to continue.

Mr. Smallcomb described El Niño as a period where the tropical Pacific was unusually warm and La Niña was where it was unusually cool. These had global weather ramifications. He stated it was predicted to be a weak El Niño winter where the water in the tropical Pacific Ocean would be a little warmer than normal. He mentioned historical weak El Niños produced a wide variety of results and there was no direct correlation between the strength of El Niño seasons and the amount of precipitation. He could not make a prediction for this winter, though he commented there was a 20 percent chance of snow on Christmas Eve.

Mr. Smallcomb pointed out there was still much grassy vegetation in the area and the NWS would brief fire agencies if a dangerous fire scenario came up. He reminded the Board there had been examples of this over the prior 10 years and he felt the concept of a fire season was becoming antiquated. Pointing to the map of burn scars,

he stated heavy or prolonged precipitation could result in flooding scenarios. He added the community around the Perry Fire could be affected if they were to receive heavy rainfall.

Mr. Smallcomb explained inside sliders were storms that produced a half inch to two inches of snow, and they caused mass chaos because people did not take them seriously. He said they were the least predictable storms and sometimes only one or two days' notice was possible. He said he was more concerned about small snow events than large events. He highlighted the new snow squall warning that would be issued if the NWS saw a narrow, intense band of snow heading to the area; the warning would go to the Emergency Alert System, broadcasters, and on the NWS' webpage. He anticipated they would be available as cell phone alerts after the current winter season.

Chair Berkbigler thanked him and opined Reno weather was difficult to predict. Mr. Smallcomb agreed and remarked even he was sometimes caught off guard.

Commissioner Jung stated 'snow squall' and 'inside slider' were important terms to remember and anything else was difficult to predict outside of three days. Mr. Smallcomb clarified atmospheric rivers that came off the Pacific Ocean and could result in flooding were easier to predict as far as a week away; smaller storms were trickier. Commissioner Jung said the smaller storms were dangerous because drivers felt they could drive like normal and Mr. Smallcomb agreed.

There was no public comment on this item.

18-208F **AGENDA ITEM 8** Fire Chief Report.

- A. Informational briefing on operational matters and activities for the month of November and December 2018 to include the following items:
 - 1. Green Waste Collection Update
 - 2. Bulldozer Acquisition (Chief Gorgon and Captain Bunn)
 - 3. Fire Prevention Update (Chief Beaver)
 - 4. Station 37 Redevelopment Update
 - 5. Strategic Plan Refresh
 - 6. Rebranding of TMFPD
- B. Commissioner Request Dashboard

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore mentioned the first year of the green waste program resulted in the collection of 1,000 cubic yards of material, but the current year saw 5,000 cubic yards of waste. He expected the program to grow. He pointed out future challenges included heavy equipment needs, land to stack the waste, and manpower. He thanked Boy Scout Troop 7322 who helped seniors unload their trailers at the Eastlake Boulevard station. He stated the TMFPD would assess the cost of the program but he thought they were still under budget. He thanked citizens for cleaning their waste to create defensible space.

Chief Moore introduced Deputy Chief Scott Gorgon and Captain Brian Bunn to speak about a new bulldozer acquisition. Chief Gorgon said the District acquired a new bulldozer through the Federal Excess Personal Property Program via the Department of Defense, who in turn worked with the United States Department of Agriculture. The program gave or lent equipment to fire services. He indicated Captain Bunn searched hundreds of internet pages to find a 1996 D7 high-track Caterpillar bulldozer with less than 900 hours on its engine. He noted it was delivered the prior week and it was at the Caterpillar dealership for minor repairs. He remarked the equipment was on loan to the District, who would have to put it in service within a year. He hoped to have a program up and running by the next fire season. He expected to use the bulldozer for flood mitigation and fire suppression efforts, and said it would accomplish much more work than the current equipment. He indicated the bulldozer could be used put down a lot of line to help suppress fires.

Commissioner Lucey asked whether the TMFPD had a tractor trailer capable of mobilizing the bulldozer. Chief Gorgon said the District was in the process of acquiring a trailer and a tractor, but indicated success would depend on the equipment that might become available online. He hoped to obtain equipment at zero cost excluding shipment costs.

Commissioner Lucey inquired where the bulldozer would be housed. Chief Moore answered there was no clear place but it would most likely be in the northern part of the District, closer to areas where the bulldozer would provide the greatest benefit. He added they were looking for a lighter bulldozer to protect the southern part of the District.

Commissioner Jung asked whether the TMFPD collected addresses from the citizens who utilized the green waste program, to which Chief Moore replied they did not. Commissioner Jung felt it would be a good idea to see where citizens who used the service lived because the District could receive credit or reimbursement if they were providing those services for other jurisdictions. She thought the District could also weed out bad actors, such as landscapers who were using the program for their waste. Knowing this information could help when issues were brought before the Legislation to demonstrate the good works the District did throughout the entire County.

In response to Commissioner Jung's query about the source of the Caterpillar, Chief Gorgon answered it was from the Department of Defense's Federal Reutilization Program. He informed the Board the program was started in 1956 and the acquisition price for this piece of equipment was \$205,000 when it typically cost half a million dollars. He added there was other equipment they could use for the fuels reduction program and they were trying to find items that were free.

Commissioner Jung asked where the bulldozer was currently located. Chief Gorgon responded it was at the Caterpillar dealer in Reno and it had been shipped from Arkansas. He mentioned it would be beneficial for initial attack fires in the summer.

Chief Moore expressed excitement about acquiring an excavator and other equipment for the green waste program at no cost once they were able to locate them. The Bobcat machine they currently used was insufficient.

Deputy Chief Beaver said she requested the fire prevention update and she would try to do it at every meeting. She said the defensible space assessment program was a pilot program when she first joined the District and stressed preparation provided the greatest benefit to manage fuels and improve the survivability of people's homes.

Chief Beaver showed a video about the community outreach aspect of the program. She thanked the Palomino Valley volunteers for finding a community member to offer up her home for the video project. The video was intended to give the community an understanding about defensible space because there was a perception that defensible space involved transforming everything to dirt.

As part of the program, Chief Beaver explained community members could ask the District to walk their properties and discuss how defensible space could help them. She stressed this was not a regulatory measure, it was about helping people. She mentioned the home safety survey program, which would address safety issues inside and outside the home. She listed some of the items covered by this program, many of which were defined by the National Fire Protection Association and other publications as key issues that caused injury in the home. The safety survey would also be made available online.

Chief Beaver mentioned the District met with the Verdi community about developing a fire-adaptive community chapter and the community was moving forward with that. On November 30 the community submitted an application to become a fire-adaptive community chapter and Chief Beaver thought other communities in the district could start doing something similar. The chapter, which would be called the Verdi-Mogul Chapter, identified Ann Marie McCann as Chair and John Giovannini as Vice-Chair. It would focus on three priorities with the TMFPD's assistance: wildland fuels reduction, defensible space management, and wildfire education. She thought the bulldozer could be utilized in certain areas.

Chief Beaver emphasized the importance of supporting and improving development in the area. She stated there was currently a backlog of 47 plans waiting for review and the District was waiting for additional information on 17 other plans before proceeding. She indicated she would provide statistics regarding the number of permits issued at the next meeting. The District would soon utilize another program through Accela, Inc. to improve communication to the public.

Commissioner Jung asked what the District was doing to educate urban areas, citing Santa Rosa and Paradise as two urban areas which burned down. Chief Beaver said people in urban areas felt safe because of all the concrete. She referenced past fires in local urban areas which had resulted in the loss of residences and noted ember flight was an issue in this area. She explained she was meeting with homeowners

associations (HOAs) in areas that did not fall under the Wildland-Urban Interface Code. She conceded little time was spent on areas classified as low-hazard areas but she had spent time educating HOAs about defensible space. The most important area was within five feet of a home. She said an ember shower could ignite combustible, dry vegetation near a home and the fire could get into the walls. She noted she and Chief Gorgon were brainstorming ways to utilize all the District's resources, including volunteer stations, for community education.

Commissioner Jung requested Chief Moore get an update about what the Cities of Reno and Sparks were doing to educate urban areas. She offered to write a letter if necessary because the time had passed to educate the region about those horrific fire dangers as well as knowing ingress and egress options. She wanted either a presentation to the Board or for the cities to respond by letter.

Commissioner Jung asked what the TMFPD was doing to address the 64-permit backlog, especially knowing there was a housing crisis. Chief Beaver said the District hired two additional employees and she and her staff were responsible for evaluating permits and performing inspections. She felt they were not achieving everything they needed to with regard to the risk reduction program. Commissioner Jung asked how the Board could help. Chief Beaver replied the District was considering additional staff as a way of demonstrating a good risk reduction program, which included permitting and community outreach. She said the Board could help when it came time for the TMFPD to present its budget.

Commissioner Jung suggested the District could consider hiring temporary workers. She pointed out the Commissioners would be the ones to hear any complaints caused by the delays, and speeding up the permit approval process would alleviate the lack of affordable housing. She asked to meet with Chief Moore to discuss the budget and praised Chief Beaver for her work as spokesperson for the District.

Chair Berkbigler asked how long most developers were waiting in the process. Chief Beaver responded it took about thirty days to get a review.

Chief Moore announced the TMFPD successfully closed on the residential property near Station 37, which had been approved by the Board several months prior. They were hiring consultants to develop the overall plan, starting with the rehabilitation of the residence. After that they would raze the existing truck bay and remove the modular unit from the site. He anticipated having access to some temporary buildings to store the apparatus while building the new truck bay, which he expected to take three months. He hoped to break ground sometime in the summer.

Chief Moore said the strategic plan was set for a refresh on January 7 and he invited the Commissioners to the kickoff meeting, where they would discuss seven priorities to be addressed over the following five years. He added budget discussions would be initiated there as well.

Chief Moore remarked he had discussed with the Chair whether to rebrand the TMFPD because its jurisdiction was much larger than just the Truckee Meadows area. He wished to change the name to something more reflective of the area the District covered and he mentioned the name Washoe County Fire and Rescue. He wanted to return to the Board with some name ideas as well as cost estimates for rebranding; he thought it would be a two-year project.

Commissioner Jung requested she be involved in the process and agreed the largesse of what the TMFPD did was out of the Truckee Meadows area. She said she was okay with calling it Washoe County but cited numerous complaints the Board received which were intended for the Washoe County School District. She pointed out some citizens could be confused by that name. She stressed the importance of making sure TMFPD personnel agreed with whatever name was chosen. She opined rebranding was a great idea.

Chair Berkbigler suggested the name Northern Nevada Fire and agreed rebranding was a good idea since the District served areas outside the Truckee Meadows. Commissioner Jung pointed out they served areas outside the state and had agreements with Storey County.

Referencing the Commissioners' dashboard, he mentioned staff had been very busy with other projects but the items on the dashboard were progressing slowly.

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

18-209F **AGENDA ITEM 11** Discussion and direction to staff regarding 2019 Nevada Legislative Session and other legislative issues proposed by legislators, or by other entities permitted by the Nevada State Legislature to submit bill draft requests, or such legislative issues as may be deemed by the Chair or the Board to be of critical significance to Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore indicated staff was tracking 88 assembly bills and 89 senate bills, but there was nothing specific to report at this time. He anticipated having a more substantive update in January or February.

18-210F **AGENDA ITEM 12** Possible Closed Session pursuant to NRS 288.220 for the purpose of discussing with management representatives labor matters and negotiations.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore said this item was not necessary.

18-211F **AGENDA ITEM 13** Announcements/Reports.

Commissioner Lucey expressed concern about the Reindeer Lodge, which he said was red-tagged by the Community Services Department. He pointed out beams were exposed on the property and there was much old equipment nearby; he wondered what had been done to address fire prevention. He asked the Fire Chief Charles Moore or Deputy Chief Lisa Beaver to look into that.

Chair Berkbigler agreed it needed fire protection since there was trash everywhere. She mentioned it was on private property but work needed to be done.

Assistant District Attorney Paul Lipparelli cautioned they could not discuss the Reindeer Lodge since it was not on the agenda.

18-212F **AGENDA ITEM 14** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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10:04 p.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

MARSHA BERKBIGLER, Chair
Truckee Meadows Fire
Protection District

ATTEST:

NANCY PARENT, Washoe County Clerk
and Ex-Officio Clerk, Truckee Meadows
Fire Protection District

*Minutes Prepared By:
Derek Sonderfan, Deputy County Clerk*