

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

TUESDAY

10:00 A.M.

OCTOBER 5, 2021

PRESENT:

Vaughn Hartung, Vice Chair
Alexis Hill, Commissioner
Kitty Jung, Commissioner, via phone
Jeanne Herman, Commissioner

Catherine Smith, Deputy County Clerk
Charles Moore, Fire Chief
Mary Kandaras, Deputy District Attorney

ABSENT:

Bob Lucey, Chair

The Board convened at 10:01 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, County Clerk Jan Galassini called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

Vice Chair Hartung assumed the gavel in Chair Lucey's absence.

21-180F **AGENDA ITEM 3** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

21-181F **AGENDA ITEM 4** Announcements/Reports.

There were no Board member comments.

CONSENT ITEMS – 5A and 5B

21-182F **5A** Recommendation to approve the meeting minutes from the September 7, 2021 Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting.

21-183F **5B** Recommendation to receive the 2021-2024 Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District's Strategic Plan which includes the following goals: (1) Develop an effective organization responsive to the needs of its members and the community it serves; (2) Effectively manage the organization's financial and capital resources to ensure its long-term financial stability; (3) Deliver effective and efficient services to the community; (4) Develop a safe community through proactive fire prevention, public safety education, and hazard mitigation; (5) Maintain close and effective communications

with the public and policymakers; and (6) Develop a highly trained and proficient workforce. (All Commission Districts)

Commissioner Hill said she sent comments on the strategic plan to Fire Chief Charles Moore. She asked about the process for getting a revised strategic plan with her suggestions. Chief Moore responded the Board could direct him to incorporate Commissioner Hill's comments into the plan, which he would bring to the Board at the November meeting.

Commissioner Hill thought the strategic plan was great and appreciated how it discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD). The plan listed strategies on how to address weaknesses, and she had ideas to incorporate into the plan. For instance, she commented, recruitment and diversity had been a weakness for the TMFPD, and she collaborated with Chief Moore on a solution: work with the fire academy in the school district to ensure all children realized they could potentially become firefighters.

Commissioner Hill also proposed the creation of a staff committee with the TMFPD and the Cities of Sparks and Reno. She said the entities would work together to solve problems and achieve better response times, which would lead to better fire service in the region. She thought there was an opportunity to create a regional fire board task force that would work like the Community Homelessness Advisory Board.

Commissioner Hill spoke about goal 4 and wished to add to the County's resiliency program regarding natural disasters, especially concerning fires due to climate and development changes in the community. She thought adding ways to deal with these issues should be put in the strategic plan. She proposed the addition of electronic vehicles to the TMFPD fleet. Chief Moore advised he would draft language for Commissioner Hill's changes.

There was no response to the call for public comment on the Consent Agenda Items listed above.

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

21-184F **AGENDA ITEM 6** Fire Chief Report

A. Informational briefing on operational matters and activities for the month of September and October 2021 to include the following items:

1. Update on Capital Projects
2. Green Waste Program Calendar
3. Open Burning
4. Update on the Dispatch Transition Project

B. Review of recent critical calls response statistics for August 2021 to include Mutual and Auto Aid for our regional partners.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore reminded the Board the TMFPD purchased a house next to the existing truck bay in Hidden Valley. He noted development of the floor plan for the residence portion was well underway. Phase 1, he indicated, was to remodel the house into functional resident quarters. He commented the residence's garage had a recreational vehicle (RV) bay that was large enough to fit a type 1 engine, so they would be able to operate out of that while the modular was moved off-site. The old truck bay, he explained, would be demolished as it was very small and difficult to park a large engine in. He expected work to begin on the truck bay this summer, and work on the residential portion would begin around April of the following year. Vice Chair Hartung asked whether the RV bay would need to be retrofitted for exhaust and Chief Moore replied yes.

Regarding the recently purchased property on Barron Way, Chief Moore mentioned an architect had been hired to plan for training functions they wanted built in the back of the building. He commented they were analyzing the existing mechanical and electrical systems, security issues, and additional office space. With the additional ambulance crew at Spanish Springs, he said, they needed to add two bedrooms, two restrooms, and an apparatus bay. They were in the process of going through conceptual plans and he hoped to relay anticipated costs to the Board in November. He commented he hoped to have the project completed in early spring.

Chief Moore spoke about the consolidated station in Washoe Valley and said they had not taken many steps, but they had received proposals from architectural firms for the design. He was unsure whether the Public Works Department had selected an architect yet. Vice Chair Hartung asked about Chief Moore's preferred move-in date. Chief Moore responded he would love to move in by the end of 2022, but that might be an aggressive timeline. Ideally, he said, the Barron Way and Washoe Valley facilities would have the same contractor and the move-ins would happen together.

Chief Moore commented the Green Waste Program would start that weekend in Washoe Valley. The two-day event had always been popular, and he noted traffic had backed up extensively the prior year. This year, he felt the TMFPD had a good plan to minimize line wait times. He said they targeted other communities for events between now and December, including Virginia Highlands, Caughlin Ranch, Verdi, the North Valleys, Palomino Valley, Spanish Springs, and a second event in Washoe Valley. He appreciated the assistance from the fuels crew, Chief August Isernhagen, and NV Energy for the events.

Deputy Chief Dale Wade commented open burning was still prohibited and he encouraged citizens to utilize the Green Waste Program events instead. Depending on the weather and fuel moisture, he opined, fire restrictions for wood and charcoal use on personal property could be lifted within the week. He clarified this applied to fires for the purpose of cooking in the backyard or sitting around a campfire. Pile burning referred to

the burning of green waste on a property. Vice Chair Hartung asked when burning for agricultural uses would be permitted. Deputy Chief Wade said it would depend on the weather conditions and fuel moisture, but he was hopeful it would happen in the next month when winter arrived.

Chief Moore commented the transition of dispatch to the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) was going well. The data line between REMSA and the County was installed, and they expected the dispatching consoles to arrive soon. He noted the remainder of the work involved programming the computer-aided dispatch with REMSA's dispatch. He explained the radio frequency transition would be unnoticeable as radios would still be on the same frequencies. He expected programming to go live after the first of the year.

Chief Moore communicated they had a lot of fire activity recently and thanked the crews for their responsiveness. He said it was difficult to quantify the number of people who had been helped as there was no way to know how bad a fire could have gotten if it had gotten away from the firefighters. He was thankful they worked regionally to prevent fires like the Washoe Drive Fire from happening.

21-185F **AGENDA ITEM 7** Presentation, discussion, and possible direction to staff regarding a structure fire at 11085 Broken Hill occurring on September 4, 2021 to include issues related to the dispatching of Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and Reno Fire Department for this call and issues related to dispatch processes, policies and current Mutual and Automatic aid agreements between Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and its regional partners. This matter will also include discussion and possible direction to staff regarding the dispatch of the nearest emergency resource regardless of jurisdiction. (All Commission District)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore talked about the structure fire at 11085 Broken Hill on September 4. Although the fire was only three tenths of a mile away from the nearest fire station, there was a substantial delay in the TMFPD being notified of it. In fact, he explained, the initial way they were notified of the fire was from a fire captain who saw smoke out of the kitchen window at the station. He thought it was important for the Board and the public to understand the circumstances of the fire, because he felt there was an opportunity for process improvement.

Chief Moore conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with County Clerk Jan Galassini, and reviewed slides with the following titles: Broken Hill Structure Fire Timelines; Initial Smoke Report Map; Drive Time Map; and TMFPD & RFD Potential Auto Aid EMS Calls Map.

Chief Moore said the jurisdictional line ran directly behind the structure fire and most of the calls came from Reno. Typically, he commented, those calls would ping Reno cell phone towers and be transferred to Reno Dispatch.

Speaking about the fire timeline, Chief Moore asserted it would not normally take the TMFPD nine minutes to go three tenths of a mile to a fire. He said the delay in response time was not the fault of the dispatchers, as they could not be expected to pinpoint the jurisdiction prior to dispatching. He explained it had been difficult for dispatchers to determine the exact location of the fire until an off-duty Washoe County Hasty Team member reported the address of the fire. That, he believed, was when Reno Dispatch determined the fire was in TMFPD's jurisdiction. The TMFPD was already on the scene by the time Reno Dispatch transferred the information to them.

Chief Moore said the TMFPD was on the run string for an outside fire, which would have triggered an automatic aid call. He wanted to discuss the parameters of the automatic aid relationship with the City of Reno. In 2016, Senator Ben Kieckhefer introduced legislation that mandated sending the closest unit dispatching for brush and structure fires. He said this was the current protocol for brush and structure fires only; dispatching the closest unit did not apply for emergency medical service calls or car accidents. He noted an exception made for the City of Sparks where they followed the protocol of dispatching the closest unit for every call regardless of jurisdiction. He commented the relationship was helpful to the TMFPD because it was done on automatic and mutual aid, which allowed the City of Sparks to help with structure fires in Sun Valley and Spanish Springs.

Vice Chair Hartung asked Chief Moore to define closest unit, wondering whether that meant automatic vehicle location (AVL) or closest unit in terms of station proximity. Chief Moore commented AVL had not been activated.

Chief Moore believed the lack of a relationship with the Reno Fire Department (RFD) to dispatch the closest unit was a glaring issue and a policy failure. Regarding the Broken Hill structure fire, Chief Moore felt that, if the TMFPD had been dispatched on the initial smoke report, the station crew would have seen the column of smoke. In his opinion, the public was being harmed by not having the ability to send the closest unit to the scene of emergencies. He thought this problem could be easily fixed and it needed to happen immediately, along with talks about programming the new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system.

Chief Moore said there was a belief that a fully consolidated fire department was what the region needed, and he had never heard the Board say it opposed consolidated fire service. He suggested enacting a policy change and, if the Board wanted to talk about consolidated fire services later, they could. He recommended starting by agreeing to dispatch the closest unit regardless of call type. He referenced the potential auto aid EMS calls map, saying it represented opportunities to send the closest unit to an emergency. The map only referenced Stead, but he said it happened throughout the service area.

Chief Moore thought issues would be resolved if the entire region had a single fire department. In his opinion, the solution was complex and would take a couple of years to resolve, possibly needing a legislative fix. He proposed the Board authorize himself and the Washoe County manager to speak with Reno City Manager Doug Thornley and Reno City Fire Chief David Cochran about short-term fixes and long-term strategies to address the problem.

Vice Chair Hartung asked whether the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) handling TMFPD's dispatch would have changed who was dispatched to the Broken Hill Fire. He recalled Chief Moore's comment that the outcome was a policy failure, not a dispatch failure, and there was a simple overlay that showed jurisdictions. Chief Moore replied the notable thing about the Broken Hill Fire call was the TMFPD was on the run string for the RFD to go to a structure fire at or behind the animal hospital. He explained calls were cloned from one dispatch agency to another, but the TMFPD did not receive the cloned call until 12:24 p.m. Reno dispatch took multiple 911 calls regarding the Broken Hill Fire and interrogated the callers; the information was then pushed to the dispatcher who set up the CAD and dispatched the engines. At that point, the engines talked to each other and finally the call was cloned. The cloning of the call, he thought, needed to occur first so time was not wasted sending the call to other agents.

Vice Chair Hartung again asked whether REMSA handling TMFPD's dispatch would have changed who was dispatched to the fire. Chief Moore said it was possible that would not have happened because of the CAD-to-CAD interface between the City of Reno and REMSA; he thought that information could have been passed automatically. In theory, once REMSA dispatch was set up, the process would have sped up, but he thought it would have been the same outcome. Vice Chair Hartung said the scenario created an opportunity to learn and make the system better.

Chief Moore recalled Chair Lucey's direction to invite the City of Sparks to the conversation TMFPD and the City of Reno would have. He further recalled Dean Dow, president and chief executive officer of REMSA, saying he was not opposed to considering integration into this super district that would cover most of northern Nevada. A super district would be a lot to discuss and could potentially take two to five years to start. He thought there were simple, short-term things that could be done to improve outcomes. He suggested a policy change incorporating the closest fire station to an emergency, even if it was not in their jurisdiction, would improve outcomes.

Commissioner Hill recalled the previous discussion about the strategic plan and the creation of a staff committee, and she suggested Chief Moore consider creating an elected panel to generate education opportunities, understand how different agencies worked, and resolve problems. She thought there could be opportunities to get members of the Board of Fire Commissioners involved in the discussions, if Chief Moore thought that would be beneficial.

Chief Moore agreed with Commissioner Hill and felt the Board would need to talk to the Reno City Council, the Sparks City Council, and REMSA to analyze long-

and short-term opportunities. Commissioner Hill thought that, if legislative changes were needed, it was important the elected officials at the State level saw cooperation between the TMFPD and the Cities of Sparks and Reno. He clarified he envisioned asking the Legislature to allow the fire district to overlap with the Cities of Sparks and Reno and to fund a master district. He said it was a complex idea that had been talked about occasionally. Commissioner Hill thought it might be worthwhile to assess getting the other jurisdictions on board with the concept, even though it could take a bit of time. She offered her support and pointed out the commissioners had good relationships with the other jurisdictions.

Commissioner Jung mentioned the county manager's announcement the previous week at the Board of County Commissioners' meeting, and she said the manager was given a similar directive and was working with the management team. She thought the most important thing that guided everyone, despite what agency they belonged to, should be the closest, fastest response for anyone in an emergency. She said nobody cared who showed up, only about getting quick and lifesaving results. She mentioned the TMFPD was an agency entitled for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act and American Rescue Plan Act money, and this was a crucial time because the money had to be spent by 2024. She thought what Chief Moore proposed was a complete enhancement of quality of life, and she offered her support.

Vice Chair Hartung asked what Chief Moore thought the City of Sparks needed to do because, from his perspective, the TMFPD had a great working relationship with the city. Chief Moore said there were multiple solutions to a better regional approach to fire and emergency medical services, and it did not have to look like a consolidated master district; it could be something short-term. He wanted to discuss with the City of Sparks what could be improved. Dispatch, he said, was a crucial piece of how the TMFPD responded in the shortest amount of time because that time could not be made up on the road. To shorten the amount of time to respond, they would have to focus on call processing time, dispatch time, and turnout time. He said it was fortunate they had moved forward with the development of the new CAD system, because it would help the dispatch relationship between the TMFPD, the Cities of Sparks and Reno, and REMSA.

On the call for public comment, Mr. Thomas Daly mentioned the City of Reno had rejected enhancements to the automatic aid agreement with the TMFPD that Chief Moore had offered to better serve residents. He thought the existing agreement favored Reno residents who got response from both the RFD and the TMFPD while TMFPD residents did not. He thought the only solution was to return to the Legislature and resurrect Senate Bill 101 from the 2015 session. He felt the new legislation should require the closest two units regardless of jurisdiction.

Vice Chair Hartung opined the issue with the bargaining agreement was the exclusive right to serve. He asked Chief Moore what direction he wanted the Board to give him. Chief Moore talked about the 2006 mutual aid relationship between the Sierra Fire Protection District and Reno. He commented he was not proposing the TMFPD respond in lieu of the RFD in their jurisdiction; they could send both units and whoever got there first

could cancel the other unit if it was not a critical emergency. He asked the Board to authorize him, his staff, and the county manager to meet with their counterparts at the Cities of Sparks and Reno to discuss the system's failings in the interface areas along the border, opportunities for improvement, and long-term issues and solutions.

Vice Chair Hartung agreed with Commissioner Jung's point that nobody cared who showed up, just that someone did. Commissioner Hill moved to direct Chief Moore to work on possible solutions to automatic aid, involve the commissioners as necessary, and consider possible legislative authority and policy changes to ensure the best service for the community. Vice Chair Hartung asked Deputy District Attorney Mary Kandaras whether the motion was clear enough. She asked that the motion be narrowed to the issue of closest dispatch. Vice Chair Hartung rephrased the motion as direction to Chief Moore, a motion agreed to by Commissioner Hill.

On motion by Commissioner Hill, seconded by Commissioner Herman, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Chair Lucey absent, it was ordered that Chief Moore be directed to come up with a solution for closest unit dispatched, including possible legislative means, by utilizing the County manager and District staff to meet with the Cities of Reno and Sparks.

21-186F **AGENDA ITEM 8** Recommendation to accept a Federal Emergency Management Agency Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant award, # EMW-2020-FF-01103, in the estimated amount of \$380,759.80 for utilization with the District's Volunteer and Reserve Program. (All Commission Districts)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore remarked the focus of this item was primarily on Palomino Valley, Red Rock, and Gerlach; those stations were in the north of Township 22, which was the County portion. The grant, he explained, was intended to develop volunteers across both County and TMFPD jurisdictions for research on increasing the census in those locations.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Herman, seconded by Commissioner Hill, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Chair Lucey absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 8 be accepted.

21-187F **AGENDA ITEM 9** Recommendation to approve a Purchase and Sale Agreement to acquire a ten-acre parcel located at 0 Campo Rico Lane (APN 534-571-06) for \$350,000 less \$5,000 in earnest money deposit for a future fire station site to serve the greater Spanish Springs area. The close of escrow date is October 15, 2021, and if approved, authorize the Chair to execute final documents. (Commission District 4)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore said the current fire station in Spanish Springs was 40 years old and located on 1.4 acres. He noted the incredible amount of growth along Pyramid Highway and said his vision was to locate the station further north. Addressing the concerns of Vice Chair Hartung regarding access, he informed the Board he had hired Angela Fuss from Grace Street Planning. Ms. Fuss, he explained, contacted the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) to discuss how to achieve emergency access from the proposed site. NDOT's initial feedback was they would work with the TMFPD because it was an emergency service. He believed the TMFPD could have a dedicated emergency egress from the site onto Pyramid Highway that would be signaled and designed by a traffic engineer. The egress would only exist for emergency vehicles; all other administrative and employee traffic would have to use the shared access further south.

Chief Moore said staff predicted the station would not be needed for another 7 to 10 years, but he felt this was an opportunity to buy 10 acres for a reasonable price. He thought the location was strategic because it would put the TMFPD in the middle of the Spanish Springs growth, and Pyramid Highway was often used on calls. He thought there may be some risk of the TMFPD not getting the access they needed, but he did not think there was a financial risk as the parcel could be sold and the investment recovered if the TMFPD could not use the property.

Vice Chair Hartung commented he was familiar with the parcel, which had changed zoning throughout the years. He noted access would be tricky since the frontage road for the property came out at the end of Calle De La Plata, which had become a busy intersection. He asked Chief Moore to investigate the cul-de-sac at Village of the Green to the east of the parcel, as he thought there could be an opportunity to gain access there.

Vice Chair Hartung said he liked the location but was terribly concerned about access and the treacherous road, even if an emergency signal was put in. He recalled he had begged NDOT to improve that section of Pyramid Highway until at least Axe Handle Canyon Road. He felt blessed to have gotten a traffic signal at Calle De La Plata, but he thought the intersection was poorly designed and not correct for the volume of traffic. He said he would support the purchase because he thought it was a great deal and he did not think the County would get hurt on the deal.

Commissioner Jung encouraged Vice Chair Hartung to work closely with Chief Moore as she thought this was something that would enhance the quality of life for Vice Chair Hartung's constituents. She suggested they make their own corrections to the road, adding she had not received any help from NDOT on Sun Valley Boulevard issues. She suggested Vice Chair Hartung analyze the money coming in and work with Chief Moore to get the property developed so it would be a community asset.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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

21-188F **AGENDA ITEM 10** Announcements/Reports.

There were no Board member comments.

21-189F **AGENDA ITEM 11** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

* * * * *

10:58 a.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

BOB LUCEY, Chair
Truckee Meadows Fire
Protection District

ATTEST:

JANIS GALASSINI, Washoe County Clerk
and Ex-Officio Clerk, Truckee Meadows
Fire Protection District

*Minutes Prepared By:
Evonne Strickland, Deputy County Clerk*