

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

THURSDAY

8:00 A.M.

FEBRUARY 6, 2025

PRESENT:

**Alexis Hill, Chair**  
**Michael Clark, Commissioner**  
**Mariluz Garcia, Commissioner**  
**Clara Andriola, Commissioner**  
  
**Janis Galassini, County Clerk**  
**Dale Way, Interim Fire Chief**  
**Nathan Edwards, Assistant District Attorney**

ABSENT:

**Jeanne Herman, Vice Chair**

The Board convened at 8:00 a.m. with the Reno City Council and the Sparks City Council in concurrent 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 City and County Clerks called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

\* \* \* \* \*

Nevada Senator Skip Daly thanked the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC), Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve, Sparks Mayor Ed Lawson, and the members of the governing bodies present for inviting him to represent Nevada Senate District 13 at the meeting. He thanked Mayor Schieve for organizing the concurrent meeting and the BCC for hosting it.

Senator Daly reflected that he was immediately interested when he first heard news of the possibility of regionalization efforts to consolidate the fire districts. He noted that he had discussed the matter with his Reno and Sparks Fire Department associates. He indicated they were not opposed, which he described as a sentiment that he hoped the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) would also hold.

Senator Daly stated that to proceed after the conclusion of the discussions at the concurrent meeting, the legislation would need to be drafted to enable the creation of a joint powers board that could determine the details surrounding the authorizations and timing. He noted that the structure and administration of the joint powers board would be left to the cities and the County and would not be included in the legislation. He stated that he had already sent a Bill Draft Request (BDR) to begin that process, but asserted that details would be needed for the provisions to be included in the drafted legislation. He

noted that he would contact the governing bodies again after the concurrent meeting proceedings to gather the necessary information to put the legislation forward.

Senator Daly stated that nothing had been decided definitively regarding the structure and funding process of the drafted bill and noted that subsequent discussions would be held to determine the details. He said they would include as much detail in the legislation as possible to create a strong framework that would leave the most authority to the joint powers and local governments to make determinations.

Senator Daly remarked that there were many questions. He reiterated that the initial contents of the bill draft were provisional, as there would be ongoing committee processes, discussions, and hearings to consider. He stressed that they would attempt to ensure as much collaboration and agreement as possible to enable them to move forward.

Senator Daly reiterated that the local governing bodies would be in control of ensuring the success of the regionalization effort. He recommended that they seek, listen to, and rely on the advice of experts when they faced disagreements or challenges. He stressed the importance of focusing on the goals of the regionalization efforts. He listed improving services, limiting costs, and increasing preparedness as examples of what they should aim to achieve by proceeding with the regionalization.

Senator Daly noted that he was looking for input on the structure and funding of the regionalization efforts. He stated that he had ideas for those topics. He emphasized that he was not the only one who would decide on the legislation, as that was subject to approval from 63 legislators and Governor Joe Lombardo. He stated that they would need to agree and that the relevant governing bodies would need to collaborate. He reiterated the importance of remembering the collective goal of providing improved services to the citizens of Washoe County.

Senator Daly repeated that he would seek help from the governing bodies by requesting they provide more information to enable him to draft the bill and noted that they would continue discussions throughout the entire process.

Chair Hill thanked Senator Daly for bringing the governing bodies together. She noted she had a few remarks to provide before giving Mayor Schieve and Mayor Lawson an opportunity to speak before hearing public comments. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting and welcomed the representatives of the Cities of Reno and Sparks to the Washoe County Commission Chambers. She noted that there was a history of collaboration between the governing bodies. She expressed that she looked forward to continued discussions and collaborative work.

Chair Hill noted that the region had experienced significant growth and quoted Senator Daly's remarks regarding finding innovation and a new way of looking at things to identify opportunities. She noted that the BCC was focused on service and was very proud of the TMFPD. She expressed that the BCC was very fortunate to work with the Cities of Reno and Sparks, as she noted they possessed incredible fire services and Fire

Chiefs. She reiterated her gratitude to Senator Daly for bringing the four governing bodies together and pushing the region to consider public safety first. She expressed her full support for making policy based on good data. She opined that there was an excellent opportunity for the governing bodies to collaborate to find data and the tools available to move the regional discussions forward. She expressed that she was excited to participate in the subsequent talks and moved the discussion to Mayor Schieve, noting that she had also been pushing for the organization of a concurrent meeting.

Mayor Schieve thanked Chair Hill and the BCC for their generosity in hosting the meeting. She noted that she had many ongoing thoughts and ideas. She expressed her appreciation for everyone attending the meeting and for cooperating despite their busy and demanding schedules. She attested that she participated in constant meetings regarding what their fire department looked like, especially during the approach of wildfire season and the occurrences of the Davis Fire and the wildfires in Los Angeles (L.A.), California. She reflected that a meeting had been scheduled in advance to discuss the potential of organizing a regional meeting to identify a collaborative approach. She noted that the meeting occurred just a few days after the sudden emergence of the L.A. wildfires.

Mayor Schieve echoed Chair Hill's remarks about the substantial changes the region has undergone and noted that many factors, such as size, population, terrain, and weather, needed to be considered. She expressed that the meeting was a great opportunity to collaborate and see what regionalization would look like.

Mayor Schieve noted that factors from the L.A. wildfires needed to be identified to ensure the region was as safe as possible. She opined that everyone would assume adequate water would be available when they turned on a water hose. She emphasized that the governing bodies could not make those assumptions. She described that as a primary reason she wanted to conduct the concurrent meeting, as those fires had left her and many community members with questions. She noted that she did not have many answers to those questions and expressed certainty that many of the other members of the attending governing bodies also did not have them.

Mayor Schieve stated that there were challenges learned from every event. She referred to communication issues during the Davis Fire because the fire greatly impacted the television and radio communication towers. She further explained that during the Davis Fire, power had to be shut off, and she noted her uncertainty regarding how many people had been particularly prepared for that. She reiterated that those were the kinds of challenges they needed to investigate, especially when turning off residents' power could impact the elderly residents in the community who relied on oxygen tanks or could prevent people from charging their phones and devices.

Mayor Schieve stressed the importance of having those discussions collectively and transparently, as the region needed them at that time more than ever. She stated that the services provided by the governing bodies could not remain adequate if boundaries held them back. She noted that it was dangerous and opined that despite the

topic not being popular, it was one that the governing bodies would have to face together by remaining realistic and having honest conversations.

Mayor Schieve thanked Senator Daly for wanting to tackle such complex issues and expressed her appreciation for him. She noted that she could not live with herself if they did not move forward transparently and address what that would look like in the region. She referred to Ms. Hannah Hoobyar, who she reported was in attendance at the meeting, and emphasized the devastation of losing a loved one or a home in a fire. She voiced that nobody in the community should ever have to face that.

Mayor Schieve thanked the meeting participants and noted that many of those in the Commission Chambers were leaders in that space and that they worked better together. She stated that none of the members of the governing bodies present at the meeting were in their positions when many of the initial decisions were made. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work together in the present.

Mayor Lawson stated that now was the perfect time and that he viewed the discussion as an innovation and an opportunity to identify how to provide better service and faster response times. He noted that those factors would be incorporated into the discussion, as would how the regionalization would be set up, governed, and funded. He said identifying funding sources was not a popular subject in the Nevada Legislature, but he appreciated Senator Daly's offer to investigate that.

Mayor Lawson attested that it was time that the governing bodies thoroughly evaluated the topic. He stated they were 100 percent supportive of the journey to achieve that. He cautioned the governing bodies not to set strict expectations and noted that the problem would not be solved at the meeting. He suggested that what the governing bodies would solve and the question they would have to ask themselves was whether they would pursue a different way of providing fire services. He asserted that if that was determined to be the case, they could proceed with the other questions and start to identify the form and function of how it would all work.

Mayor Lawson echoed Senator Daly's sentiments of wanting solutions and ideas. He stated that a horrible idea was still an idea and expressed his desire to be given ideas that made sense and provided a service for the community.

\* \* \* \* \*

**25-040F**      **AGENDA ITEM A3** Public Comment.

Mr. Mark Neumann greeted the members of the governing bodies and asserted that each was experiencing financial issues. He elaborated that they had been operating on an old tax basis written many years ago. He reported that he purchased a home located in unincorporated Washoe County for \$150,000 in 1997 and was paying twice as much for property taxes as would be required of an individual who moved to a remodeled home built in the 1950s valued at \$1.5 million located in Reno. He asserted that each of

the governing bodies and all counties in Nevada were impacted by the tax plan and opined that nothing would alleviate the issue unless action were taken at the State level. He reported that he had lived in the area since 1962. He reflected that the regional fire departments had all been consolidated in the past, before arguments within the organization led to their separation into different entities. He acknowledged that the governing bodies were taking action to reconsolidate the fire departments. He asked if the members elected to the governing bodies in the future would cause the dissolution to occur again. He emphasized the need to fix the issue to prevent recurring disagreements permanently. He reiterated the need to fix the tax tables to ensure equity in property taxes for all residents. He thanked the governing bodies.

Ms. Hannah Hoobyar greeted the governing bodies and introduced herself. She reported that she had lost her house in the Davis fire and noted that it was the second home to be burned down. She stated that her home was located south of The Chocolate Nugget. She opined that if the several communication issues from the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) had not occurred, she would likely have been able to save more of her property and evacuate sooner. She reported being told constantly by TMFPD not to evacuate from her home despite being able to see the fire traveling toward her. She stated that her house was located along the barrier. She attested that if they had utilized the United States (US) Route 395 Alternate to evacuate, she would not have had the opportunity to return until they were given permission, which she noted often took multiple days or was never communicated. She reiterated that there had been several communication issues, such as being assured by several 911 operators that there was no need to evacuate despite conditions appearing to worsen. She emphasized that despite having those concerns, the location made it difficult for her to determine what was occurring with the condition of the fire. She reported seeing smoke before a truck from the fire department reached the area, and she was given only five minutes to evacuate her home thoroughly before being told to leave the area. She reflected that she discovered her home was lost to the fire through a fire department setting a photo of her burned home as the cover image on their Facebook page. She emphasized the terrible impact of losing a home to a fire. She noted that there was not a significant amount of assistance available despite many assuring her they would help her. She described herself as lucky to have received help from individuals in Reno, as she speculated that she would be homeless without it. She requested that the governing bodies work toward fixing those communication issues at the meeting and referred to relevant comments by Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve. She reiterated that if those issues had been addressed earlier, she might have been able to get more out of her home before evacuating and would not have been put into the situation that followed her evacuation. She mentioned that individuals visited the sites of active fires they were not involved in to take pictures to post on social media. She noted that there was excessive traffic when the fire impacted her home, which led to her being stuck in her driveway and having no access to the road due to people driving in the wrong direction on the road to take pictures of the burning fire. She reiterated her request and offered to answer any questions.

Chair Hill thanked Ms. Hoobyar and apologized for her loss.

Ms. Olivia Tanager introduced herself as a representative of the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club. She greeted the governing bodies and indicated her intent to discuss topics that would begin to negatively impact the region if collective consideration was not given to them. She reported that the City of Reno's Planning Commission had been attempting to identify an approach for data centers for the first time over the past two months. She attested that her organization had unsuccessfully appealed against a data center project, as there was not yet a series of ordinances she believed adequately addressed data centers. She reported that consideration should be given to the fact that there had been data center fires while creating local policies pertaining to data centers. She stressed her organization's concerns about the expected increase in utility costs associated with data centers, as they required substantial infrastructure construction due to their high energy demand, which ratepayers would be responsible for covering. She attested that her organization had additional concerns regarding the lack of economic impact contributed by data centers. She reported that the State provided a 75 percent property tax abatement and a reduced sales tax abatement of 2.5 percent. She disagreed with claims previously made by representatives of data centers who appeared before governing bodies and promised to generate significant tax revenue. She elaborated that there would be a limited impact on the revenue generated due to the significant abatements they would receive from the State. She acknowledged the budget deficits experienced by the local governing bodies and at the State level. She encouraged consideration for the lack of economic impact associated with the data center industry, to create forward-thinking ordinances and policies, to ensure they did what was best for the safety of local residents, and to consider the heavy energy and resource usage required by data centers. She stressed the necessity of thinking critically about the ways in which data centers were brought to Washoe County, Sparks, and Reno, as well as about the policies they could implement to ensure the safety of local residents.

Ms. Cathy Fulkerson greeted the governing bodies and expressed her excitement to see representatives from each body present to collaborate for regional emergency management. She stressed the importance of maintaining a regional perspective and addressing the issues cooperatively to find solutions. She noted that she was present to comment on data centers and introduced herself as the Facilitator of Third Act Nevada, which she described as a national organization that empowered seniors to protect the planet. She expressed concern about data centers, specifically the approved Webb Data Center in northern Reno. She asserted that the Webb Data Center would demand 30 megawatts of power annually, which she described as equivalent to the total power generated by the Steamboat Geothermal Energy Station. She opined that the cost of infrastructure necessary to build, power, operate, plan, design, and deliver two data centers would ultimately be the responsibility of Nevada ratepayers. She elaborated that ratepayers would be responsible for supporting data centers that required extensive energy and water to be cooled. She reported that one individual described data centers as thermal dissipation centers, requiring very high amounts of energy or water to power their cooling systems. She encouraged the governing bodies to consider the issue and to create a regional approach that would subject data centers to the Master Plan and sustainability measures to ensure all residents of Nevada could benefit from the data center projects. She thanked the members of the governing bodies for their service to the community.

Mr. William Steward greeted the governing bodies and thanked them for their service. He noted that he had previously commented on public safety at meetings held by each governing body and was present to discuss the topic again. He asked what happened to the Joint Fire Advisory Board, which he noted had been in place for many years in the past. He suggested that the governing bodies could address the issue by re-implementing it and returning their regional services to servicemembers and citizens who risked their lives. He acknowledged the population growth in Washoe County and asserted that the last assessments reported nearly half a million residents. He attested that as the population in the County increased, the number of calls for service would continue to grow as well. He opined that there would need to be a plan in place that was logical, fiscally responsible, and put the public first. He asserted that the government was founded on public safety, and government efficiency was critical in that regard. He reported that despite fire trucks possessing Automatic Vehicle Location technology and paramedics based in most fire stations, more would need to be done to increase public safety for the citizens served by the governing agencies. He noted that he had a lot to discuss and was grateful to have made it in time to sign up for public comment. He referred to the studies done and the Blue-Ribbon Committees and asked when the last time considerations were made about them to consider the many actions that could be taken to ensure public safety. He asserted that the Los Angeles (L.A.), California wildfires should motivate and remind the governing bodies to learn from past mistakes. He mentioned the importance of defensible space, proper city planning, ensuring safe evacuation and transportation of emergency service vehicles such as fire trucks through implementing proper egress and ingress, and camp and car fire safety and prevention. He referred to the costs associated with rebuilding after fires and those who experienced significant loss from the wildfires in L.A. He noted that many of those impacted by those wildfires would need to spend substantial amounts of money on rebuilding and face insurance-related challenges. He reported the problem of insurance companies not covering the cost of damages based on what the homes were built for. He noted that he worked with several people throughout the region on issues such as insurance, defensible space, and home hardening, which he suggested had the commonality of impacting the funding received for emergency services by lowering property value and income from property taxes. He asked how they could continue that funding if hundreds or thousands of homes were lost to fire, resulting in the real estate market facing an economic crash. He stressed that those questions had to be answered and offered to help. He requested that conversations continue with public involvement to ensure everyone could contribute to finding a solution.

**25-041F      AGENDA ITEM A4 Approval of the Agenda**

On motion by Commissioner Garcia, seconded by Commissioner Andriola, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Vice Chair Herman absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item A4 be approved.

The City of Reno made and carried a motion to approve Agenda Item A4.

The City of Sparks made and carried a motion to approve Agenda Item A4.

**25-042F**      **AGENDA ITEM B1** Presentation and discussion on the collaborative regional emergency management process, including strategic goals, community lifelines, and updates on ongoing efforts related to emergency preparedness and response plans.

Kelly Echeverria, Washoe County Emergency Management (WCEM) Administrator and Andy Ancho, Reno Fire Department Division Chief of Emergency Operations, conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Regional Emergency Management & Homeland Security; Twice Accredited; Regional Emergency Operations Center; Emergency Management & Homeland Security Team; 13 Hazards; Emergency Management Mission Areas; 32 Core Capabilities; Partners; Community Lifelines; Additional Partnership Building; Regional EM Strategic Plan 2020-2025; Goals; Emergency Management; Regional Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP); Integrated Preparedness Plan Overview; Exercise Cycle; All Together; Regional Priorities; How We Get There; Operational Coordination; Operational Communication; Mass Care Services; Community Resilience; Fatality Management Services; Preparedness; Response; Flow of Initial Events; Alerts; Alerting Tool (Rave – Smart 911); Perimeter; 2023-2024 Partners, 2025 Additions; Pre-Planning, Real-time Collaboration, Alert the Public; Cross-channel Communication; Operational Responsibilities; Recovery; Challenges; Mitigation Plan and Program; Hazard Mitigation Plan Update; Emergency Management – 13 Hazards; Mitigation; Fuels Mitigation; Program; Additional Efforts; Road to Resilience; Elected Officials; How Elected Officials Can Help; How Elected Officials Can Help (cont.); Thank you.

Ms. Echeverria and Division Chief Ancho thanked the governing bodies and introduced themselves. Ms. Echeverria reported that the WCEM agency was twice accredited with the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) and noted the importance of the accreditations as an indication that WCEM was operating at the highest level nationally recognized. She asserted that at the time of the 2020 accreditation, Washoe County was recognized as one of 32 counties nationwide that achieved EMAP accreditation twice. She informed the governing bodies that WCEM was confident in obtaining EMAP accreditation again in 2026.

Ms. Echeverria noted that WCEM was based in and ran their daily duties at the Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC). She informed the governing bodies that the REOC was open for shared use in the case of any incident occurring by any jurisdiction, including the Cities of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County, the Washoe Tribe Colonies, and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Emergency Management & Homeland Security Team* to introduce and show images of the WCEM staff that worked to support regional and certain Statewide programs. She noted that the WCEM staff included Jessica Adams-Lopes as the Homeland Security Program Coordinator, Sabrina Brasuell as the Mitigation Program Coordinator, and Francisco Ceballos as the Grants, Finance, and Local Emergency Planning Committee Coordinator.



Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *13 Hazards* to present a list of the regional hazards that could impact Washoe County. She asserted that the 13 listed hazards had been confirmed by the hazard mitigation plan. She stated that WCEM considered those hazards in all aspects of emergency management and in every action the agency took. She noted that some hazards occurred more frequently and identified wildfires and floods as prominent examples of common regional hazards. She described that the list included more impactful hazards, such as earthquakes and volcanoes.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slides titled *Emergency Management Mission Areas* and *32 Core Capabilities* to describe the strategies WCEM utilized and the impacts those strategies had. She reported that the five emergency management mission areas included prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. She expressed that WCEM was organized strategically to prevent oversight and ensure support for their communities. She noted that prevention was a strategy for stopping incidents before they could occur, primarily in law enforcement. She described preparedness and noted that Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve had previously mentioned the topic. She additionally detailed the strategies of response, recovery, and mitigation. She explained that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) outlined 32 core capabilities as distinct preparedness elements that helped guide response activities across the five primary mission areas. She asserted that WCEM tested those capabilities in training exercises to identify faults and lapses in preparedness. She noted that certain capabilities pertained to all mission areas while others were specifically related to one mission area.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Partners*, which depicted the logos of the agencies, corporations, businesses, and organizations that collaborated with WCEM. She reported that she had intentionally included many images in the slide to demonstrate that WCEM had a substantial number of partnerships. She noted that the WCEM approached emergency management mission areas cooperatively with those organizations and indicated that addressing all hazards and managing the related emergencies were goals that needed to be undertaken by a collective community effort. She requested that any representatives of WCEM partner organizations present at the meeting stand to be recognized for their efforts. Ms. Echeverria thanked them for their partnership and their daily work. She acknowledged that while their daily endeavors might not receive public recognition or be widely witnessed, she contended that WCEM could not complete its emergency management objectives in disaster situations without the everyday work contributed by its partners.

Ms. Echeverria elaborated that the WCEM partners played a role in the categories listed on the slide titled *Community Lifelines*. She asserted that the community lifelines depicted on the slide consisted of eight vital services that assisted all other aspects of society in functioning. She noted that the eight community lifelines were shown on the top of the slide within blue circles, while the societal services directly related to them were listed beneath them. She provided several examples of regionally relevant services, such as fire services, law enforcement, 911 dispatch, and transportation. She acknowledged that FEMA had created the list of community lifelines and included examples such as maritime

services that might not be as relevant to the local region. She referred to the chart included on the right of the slide and noted that the colored circles designated the status of the services provided by each lifeline. She elaborated that the designations served as a tool to better track, prioritize, and stabilize service disruptions during an incident while improving the ability to communicate with the public and governing bodies in a standardized, consistent, and digestible way. She noted that the designations also helped to ensure that all governing bodies received important information that provided them with a better understanding of the status of the communities they served.

Ms. Echeverria reported that WCEM was working towards further partnership opportunities and referred to the list of organizations in the *Additional Partnership Building* slide. She acknowledged that WCEM had already built an extensive partnership network locally but was seeking partnerships from organizations in different states. She noted that WCEM was working with nearby jurisdictions in areas like South Lake Tahoe and further up the California-Nevada border. She asserted that those partnerships were sought to plan cooperative training and acknowledged that disasters would not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries and state borders. She emphasized the importance of building partnerships between jurisdictions for WCEM. She noted that WCEM supported the partnership between the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) and the Nevada Department of Emergency Management (DEM) as well as the partnerships between Nevada counties and local jurisdictions. She reported that WCEM planned to attend the Nevada Emergency Preparedness Association Conference the following week, which would bring each of the partners listed on the slide together. She described the role of the Critical Infrastructure Security Administration (CISA) as a collaborator between partners in every jurisdiction to assess vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Regional EM Strategic Plan 2020-2025* and elaborated on her previous mention of utilizing strategies. She informed the governing bodies that WCEM worked annually to maintain a five-year strategic plan for regional emergency management. She noted that WCEM utilized that strategic plan to address potential gaps in the region and prioritize future goals.

Ms. Echeverria described what WCEM determined to be the program's six primary objectives in the slide titled *Goals*. She referred to the list on the slide and noted that WCEM had worked towards achieving those targets since they were first identified in 2020. She stated that the goals would be reassessed again later in 2025 to address the identified lapses best, recognize what had been accomplished, and create new or additional goals for the five-year plan set to begin the following year. She reported that the WCEM Homeland Security Program started in 2020 when Ms. Adams-Lopes joined the WCEM staff. She recounted that WCEM participated in several homeland security initiatives prior to Ms. Adams-Lopes' employment with the program, such as a Statewide Continuity of Operations Program (COOP). She recognized Ms. Adams-Lopes for transitioning various projects into a comprehensive program that supported the community and opined that WCEM was lucky to have her building the program.

Ms. Echeverria reported that WCEM set the goal of creating a coordinated approach to increasing a culture of preparedness. She noted that those efforts were impeded due to the COVID-19 (C19) pandemic preventing WCEM staff from directly communicating with the public. She reflected that WCEM staff approached the goal through virtual means and messaging, which created a noticeable impact once direct communications could be resumed. She emphasized that WCEM staff appreciated the opportunity to resume direct communication in the field and build community connections. Ms. Echeverria described another of the WCEM goals as facilitating regional recovery resources by connecting volunteer organizations active in disasters with those who needed access to available resources. She acknowledged that while WCEM staff could not always provide all necessary resources, they always strived to do so through various means, such as informing and connecting their partners to address community needs. She emphasized that WCEM set the goal of encouraging mitigation strategies. She expressed that she was extremely proud of the mitigation program that WCEM was building. She noted the WCEM frequently coordinated regional responding resources in previous years and identified that as one of the goals outlined for continuation in the strategic plan. She described the final WCEM strategic plan goal as meeting annual EMAP reporting requirements for accreditation.

Ms. Echeverria elaborated on how the goals outlined in the strategic plan were achieved and referred to the content included on the slide titled *Emergency Management*. She noted that the approaches for filling identified gaps or lapses in an area could be outlined by the acronym for Planning, Operations, Equipment, Training, and Exercises (POETE). She noted that individuals in the emergency management industry appreciated acronyms, and that the abbreviation POETE was often used for guidance. She elaborated that the acronym reminded them to ask critical questions such as whether operations were planned sufficiently, whether enough equipment was available, if satisfactory training had taken place, or if exercises could be done to test the plans they had created.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Regional Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP)*. She reported that WCEM developed and updated the IPP during an annual workshop to address lapses discovered in the 32 core capabilities of the region. She noted that WCEM tracked the status of those capabilities and utilized its annual workshop to follow up on task assignments, identify yearly progress, and develop plans to address gaps in core capabilities using the POETE model. She remarked that the WCEM had implemented a three-year plan to ensure the successful completion of those initiatives. She noted that the three-year plan facilitated the efficient scheduling of training and fostered collaboration within the community.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slides titled *Overview*, *Exercise Cycle*, and *All Together*. She described the FEMA Preparedness Cycle and listed the steps included in the cycle that assisted the WCEM in prioritizing the identification of gaps in regional capabilities. She noted that the FEMA Preparedness Cycle was directly related to the Exercise Cycle implemented by WCEM to test, conduct, and evaluate WCEM program operations for potential areas of improvement. She emphasized that those improvement

efforts were continuous and occurred outside of times of disaster to ensure WCEM was prepared to address emergency situations quickly and efficiently for the safety of the community. She reiterated how the FEMA Preparedness and WCEM Exercise cycles compared and overlapped.

Ms. Echeverria described the five priorities WCEM determined for the IPP and how those priorities could be achieved in the slides titled *Regional Priorities* and *How We Get There*. She recited the list on the slide and elaborated on the benefits of WCEM prioritizing operational coordination, operational communication, mass care services, community resilience, and fatality management. She noted that operational coordination and operational communication determined how WCEM worked, communicated, and shared information cooperatively. She provided examples of mass care services, such as providing temporary evacuation points and shelters, feeding and caring for pets or livestock, and overseeing reunification efforts. She described community resilience as supporting the community by lessening or eliminating the impact of a disaster. She suggested that fatality management was a priority that needed no further elaboration. She noted that utilizing the POETE model could effectively achieve those priorities.

Ms. Echeverria apologized for the substantial text on the slides titled *Operational Coordination*, *Operational Communication*, *Mass Care Services*, *Community Resilience*, and *Fatality Management Services*. She elaborated that the POETE model identified specific actions that could be taken to ensure the success of the five regional priorities. She speculated that while some details could be redundant as they suited multiple categories, specific differences justified their inclusion. Ms. Echeverria noted that to approach planning for the priority of operational coordination, WCEM initiated work on updating the Regional Emergency Operations Procedure (REOP), determined the standard operating procedure (SOP) for policy group communication to ensure all governing agencies understood and could communicate about the actions of WCEM, and planned for the implementation of an evacuation study. She described the strategic use of organization and equipment WCEM used to achieve operational coordination and provided an example of building an events operation center. She emphasized the efforts of WCEM that contributed toward facilitating operational coordination through training and exercise approaches, such as collaborating with the airport, participating annually in the Great ShakeOut earthquake drill, and supporting the Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH) Earthquake Exercise. She reiterated that the following slides had similar content with minor differences for each of the five regional priorities. She noted that she would not recite the information for each priority aloud. She indicated that she, Division Chief Ancho, or Scott Means, Sparks Fire Department Division Chief of Emergency Management, could provide additional details on the topic to those interested.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Preparedness* and described that WCEM was focused on providing services related to preparedness. She reported that WCEM participated in numerous actions to increase regional preparedness. She elaborated that the WCEM had participated in community tabling at events, presented at Community Advisory Boards (CABs) and neighborhood associations, created multi-language evacuation videos, conducted educational proclamations with governing bodies,

distributed media messaging, and developed a focus on personal preparedness. She reflected on the City of Sparks community program where staff assembled go-bags for local seniors. She noted that the image on the slide was taken during that City of Sparks program and elaborated that the program brought together several partners.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Flow of Initial Events* and elaborated on the information included and the emergency response timeline. She described the sequence of events included on the slide as an example of the progression of a typical high-level incident. She stated that if an incident occurred and a threat to the population was determined, a request for an evacuation alert would be sent to emergency management. She noted that emergency management would then be tasked with confirming the safety of the evacuation site. She provided a related example from the evacuation efforts of the Davis Fire. She described that WCEM communicated with incident command, and the South Valleys Library was initially determined to be suitable as a temporary evacuation site outside of the threat of the Davis Fire before being moved elsewhere. She elaborated that once confirmation was received that the evacuation site was safe, emergency management staff were responsible for activating the Emergency Shelter Council (ESC), which could support the operation and send the alert. She stressed that the response process utilized previously had been much more arduous. Ms. Echeverria reflected on her initial work in the region with the Red Cross and emphasized the inefficiency of past emergency alert procedures. She reported using a pager to receive notification of the event, which prompted staff to call a conference line to identify a location that could be confirmed as available and mutually agreed upon before any evacuation alerts could be distributed, multiple minutes later. She stressed that the modern process was much quicker. She opined that determining libraries as temporary evacuation points was a simple and quick decision, as libraries already served as places of information and comfort for the community to which the County would have guaranteed access. She reported that WCEM built a catalog that identified potential shelter areas ahead of time, such as mass migration sites, Recreational Vehicle (RV) sites, and green sites that suited tents if necessary. She noted that the catalog allowed WCEM to easily refer to a color-coded map to identify a suitable location for any need.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Alerts* to describe the information included when emergency alerts were distributed. She stated that emergency alerts consisted of information on the type of threat, the area being evacuated, where individuals needed to relocate, and how information could be found. She reported that WCEM had utilized the Perimeter map website, which depicted where someone was physically located in relation to an evacuation zone. She stressed the importance of that feature due to the high volume of visitors in the region. She stated that past procedures determined evacuation zones based on where a person lived compared to an area outlined by specific roads or streets. She noted that visitors might not be familiar enough with the area to know whether the evacuation alert applied to them and emphasized that the time lost in discerning their location could be critical. She reiterated that the Perimeter website reduced lost time and confusion for the public.

Ms. Echeverria informed the governing bodies that WCEM changed its alerting tool to Smart 911 and referred to the content in the slide titled *Alerting Tool (Rave – Smart 911)*. She described that WCEM was motivated to transition to Smart 911 as the primary alerting tool due to a desire to communicate more effectively and rapidly with partners and community members with access or functional needs. She indicated that WCEM hoped to offer additional time that could be needed for certain individuals to evacuate safely. She noted that with Smart 911, even those outside the drawn polygon boundary for the evacuation area would receive the evacuation alert. She reiterated the importance of notifying those with access and functional needs before the evacuation zone reached them, as it was critical to ensure they could take the necessary time to leave the area early. She reported that WCEM had searched for a tool to address that need for a decade before finding Smart 911. She noted that WCEM implemented the program in 2024. She reported that emergency alerts were distributed through all the technological means available to WCEM. She attested that WCEM would implement all communication methods available to them so long as implementation was possible and accessible. She listed the methods employed by WCEM to send emergency alerts in multiple languages, such as the Emergency Alert System (EAS) heard on television and radio, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) sent to mobile phones, social media posts, emails, text messages, and voicemails.

Ms. Echeverria reiterated WCEM staff's pride in the Perimeter website and referred to the program in the slides titled *Perimeter, 2023-2024 Partners, 2025 Additions, Pre-Planning, Real-time Collaboration, Alert the Public, and Cross-channel Communication*. She reported that WCEM was introduced to Perimeter by a fire partner and was subsequently implemented in 2023 for Washoe County, Carson City, Douglas County, and Storey County using Homeland Security funds. She noted that a decision was made for WCEM to pilot the Perimeter program and determine whether it was successful due to WCEM serving as the partner that bordered Lake Tahoe. She emphasized that the Perimeter program was successful and prompted a plan to add Pershing County, Elko County, Humboldt County, Lyon County, and Nye County to the program in 2025. She reported that Perimeter served as an application for first responders to share relevant information amongst themselves regarding developments in ongoing emergencies. She noted that WCEM could take the information provided by first responders, screen it for accuracy and detail, and then distribute it to the public. She acknowledged that there was significant difficulty in providing detailed information when facing the chaos caused by a fire. She reiterated that WCEM staff could take the information provided by their partners and quickly distribute it to the public through Perimeter in an accurate, confirmed, and presentable way. She noted that WCEM was utilizing the program at the time to identify the locations of sandbags to address local stormy weather. She stated that Perimeter was a low-bandwidth program and was accessible for viewing through a website address, alert notifications, a social media post, or by being embedded into other Geographical Information Systems (GIS) tools.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Operational Responsibilities* to elaborate on the listed responsibilities undertaken by WCEM. She described WCEM's two primary operational responsibilities as communication and resource support. She noted that

WCEM was also responsible for coordinating mass care operations with partners at the ESC. She stated that WCEM was responsible for coordination efforts with reunification partners and described a hypothetical example of a family assistance center being operated through WCEM to reunify family members in the case of a transportation incident with an airline. She reported that WCEM was additionally responsible for volunteer and donation management as well as damage assessment and notification.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the content on the slides titled *Recovery and Challenges*. She noted that recovery was dictated by challenges and described the common themes and difficulties faced in the recovery process. She stated that the incident's size and scope directly impacted how difficult the recovery process might be. She compared the differences in the size and scope of recovery efforts. She stated that recovery would be much different for an incident like the C19 pandemic than recovery for wildfires or hurricanes. She noted that recovery could be either a short-term or long-term process. She emphasized that housing was always a challenge faced during recovery efforts. She reported that low-income areas were more adversely impacted during disasters and presented a challenge in identifying long-term housing solutions for residents of those areas. She referred to the efforts to provide short-term housing solutions for individuals impacted by floods in 2017 while identifying potential long-term options. She stated that WCEM investigated whether there were long-term hotels located near where those residents lived in an effort to keep the impacted individuals in their community. She noted that ultimately, the WCEM discovered that there were no nearby long-term hotels to provide those individuals with the necessary housing within their community, which posed a challenge. She described the necessity for resources and potential economic loss as additional recovery challenges. She opined that WCEM was good at delivering solutions for those challenges due to the approach taken by WCEM, which first investigated the potential end impacts and worked backward toward a solution. She noted that the physical impacts were not the only factor in solving recovery challenges, as recognizing economic effects that would not be immediately obvious and mitigating those was also critical. She stated that the WCEM also considered identifying what the new normal would become after an incident as a factor in recovery.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slides titled *Mitigation Plan and Program* and *Hazard Mitigation Plan Update*. She mentioned that the mitigation plan was awaiting approval from the State and opined that the plan was something everyone should be incredibly proud of. She identified the partners for the plan as the Cities of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County, North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District (NLTFPD), Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD), Truckee River Flood Management Authority (TRFMA), Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, and all of the subject matter experts they referenced to address the 13 regional hazards. She reiterated her pride in the work completed with the partnership over the previous year. She expected there would be no issues with the State and noted that the plan would be presented to FEMA for approval once approved by the State. She attested that they had taken a different approach to the plan by identifying action plans to mitigate the many impacts of the 13 hazards. She reported that funding sources were found for each action item for the plan to prevent delays caused by applying for grants that might not be an allowable expense. She

stated that if FEMA approved the plan, the agency would be testifying to its agreement with the plan and the identified funding sources. She elaborated that those approaches would increase efficiency in obtaining the resources they sought to bring those actions to fruition. She referred again to the 13 hazards and attested that significant actions were associated with them.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the listed hazards on the slide titled *13 Hazards* and attested that many actions were associated with them. She noted the image of the bridge on the left side of the slide titled *Mitigation*. She stated that the implemented changes for the bridge had a purpose beyond updating aesthetics, as the changes significantly reduced flooding along the river corridor. She expressed her love for the bridge and the fact that it no longer flooded or required a crane on top of it to pick debris out of the river. She referred to the images in the center of the slide and described that they depicted the seismic retrofit at the Reno City Hall. She described the images on the top right portion of the slide showing bollards, which she noted had been added to prevent vehicle incidents, such as the incident in New Orleans, Louisiana, on January 1, 2025, where a vehicle collided with a crowd. She reported that WCEM was approved for additional educational signage in avalanche-prone areas near Incline Village. She noted that they had the only urban avalanche areas located around Lake Tahoe, so it was critical for WCEM to do all it could to inform the public so they could make decisions about their safety and prevent triggering an avalanche that might hit infrastructure or homes.

Ms. Echeverria referred to images included on the slide titled *Fuels Mitigation*. She introduced WCEM wildfire fuel mitigation efforts and expressed her love for goats. She noted that fuel mitigation efforts were ongoing, such as wood-chipping, TMFPD green waste event days, and NV Energy hazardous fuel reduction work done in partnership with local fire departments to mitigate potentially dangerous fuel near their infrastructure. She stated that there were many more images she could elaborate on but deferred that task to the fire departments so they could tout their capabilities related to fuel mitigation. Ms. Echeverria acknowledged that those fuels mitigation efforts were ongoing and that WCEM was trying to map them. She reported that WCEM created the Dashboard of Regional Agencies (DoRA), which was accessible on the WCEM website. She noted that one of the tabs included on the DoRA was related to fuels mitigation. She attested that WCEM attempted to implement as much information as possible into DoRA. She reported that DoRA showed efforts around the region from various agencies to ensure they were taking as much action as possible to prevent something horrible from happening.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide titled *Program*. She acknowledged her previous mention of Ms. Brasuell joining the WCEM as the Mitigation Program Coordinator and said she had done a phenomenal job. Ms. Echeverria reported that Ms. Brasuell built a map demonstrating who was responsible for what action item within the WCEM mitigation plan by jurisdiction, identified the hazards associated with each action, and served as a portal for WCEM partners. She noted that the portal allowed WCEM to more easily communicate with partner organizations so they could check on the status of different actions, identify any challenges preventing a project from coming to fruition, and recommend resources to connect partners with. She reflected that those concerns were only



addressed in the past when the WCEM 5-year plan was updated. She emphasized WCEM's desire to remain aware and informed on all of its mitigation projects so they could ensure completion and build resilience within the necessary areas to prevent or lessen the impacts of a disaster.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the content on the slides titled *Additional Efforts* and *Road to Resilience*. She expressed WCEM's pride in creating the roadmap shown on the slide. She acknowledged that many of the actions on the roadmap had already been mentioned but noted that they had been implemented into that program. She reported that WCEM started those actions in 2023 by launching the Perimeter map, conducting a full-scale evacuation exercise in Incline Village that included partners from across the region and different states, and holding a community forum in Incline Village to share the results of the exercise. She noted that the Incline Village evacuation exercise was the largest exercise WCEM had conducted in years.

Ms. Echeverria described the actions WCEM had taken in 2024 as part of the roadmap, including the formation of the Tahoe Emergency Managers Working Group (TEMWG). She elaborated that TEMWG was formed after the Caldor Fire when it was recognized that there was a lack of partnership across state lines and mutual understanding that disasters would not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. She reported that TEMWG met quarterly to share plans and training initiatives. She provided an example of collaborative events prompted by the formation of the TEMWG. She described how WCEM trained with staff from Placer County on avalanche incident response and provided Placer County with beacons and equipment.

Ms. Echeverria stated that WCEM used best practices to establish an Events Operations Group (EOG) in 2024 in collaboration with Clark County for the 2024 Red, White, and Tahoe Blue event. She described the EOG as a gathering of representatives for first responders, dispatch agencies, and emergency management to remain prepared during events for a faster response to incidents, communication with the public, or to prevent escalations from minor occurrences. She reported that the group had gathered for the Great Reno Balloon Race (GRBR) in the past. She described the planned future collaborative efforts between WCEM and staff from the Burning Man event to visit South by Southwest to research the logistics and operations of such a large-scale event and apply the knowledge gained locally during Burning Man.

Ms. Echeverria reported that WCEM launched the multi-language educational evacuation video in 2024, which set expectations of what the public might see or feel during an evacuation. She noted that WCEM launched DoRA in 2024 as well, which was integrated with Perimeter. She attested that WCEM was working on incorporating wind, traffic, weather, fuels mitigations, and emergency alerts into the Perimeter maps. She noted that WCEM also transitioned to the new 911 Smart emergency alert system in September 2024.

Ms. Echeverria stated that WCEM set the goal of completing an evacuation study in 2025 that would identify the top five areas of concern during an evacuation and

strategies to mitigate those concerns or put resources in place to ensure that evacuations would be as safe as possible without bottlenecks or difficulties.

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slides titled *Elected Officials*, *How Elected Officials Can Help*, and *How Elected Officials Can Help (cont.)* to inform the members of the governing bodies about what they could do for emergency management. She emphasized the importance of knowing the general background of emergency management. She noted that much of that information had been discussed throughout the presentation. She described that elected officials could help by understanding how to contact emergency management with questions that arose during an incident and the best process to facilitate that communication. She noted that helping constituents understand personal preparedness, as well as community planning and regulations regarding infrastructure, was also an important role for elected officials. She reported that she often heard questions about infrastructure during evacuations, despite those factors pertaining more to planning. She attested that she had no control over the number of roads going through a neighborhood. She emphasized that her role in evacuations was more closely aligned with collaborating with WCEM partners to ensure residents could get out of an area with the available resources.

Ms. Echeverria attested that elected officials could help by having familiarity with their emergency plans. She acknowledged that they operated off of core regional plans and stressed the importance of knowing response, recovery, continuity of operations, continuity of government, the process to proclaim a state of emergency, what could be requested, the process for appealing for assistance from other jurisdictions or the State, how to disseminate information and warnings, how to impose restrictions, and who was responsible for ordering evacuations and restricting re-entry. She emphasized that there was training available to the elected officials that she, Division Chief Ancho, or Division Chief Means would be happy to share and individually meet with members of the governing bodies to review whatever they might need. Ms. Echeverria concluded her presentation.

Chair Hill opened the discussion to the Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC) and the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC). She indicated that she was combining the two Boards for the discussion so Commissioners could indicate which Board they were speaking on behalf of during their comments or questions. She expressed that it was a joy for the BCC to represent the entire region and for the BOFC to represent the Fire District. Chair Hill deferred the conversation to Mayor Schieve.

Mayor Schieve thanked Chair Hill and noted that Reno City Council members were expected to maintain their regular meeting rules and operations with a limited speaking time of two minutes.

Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr acknowledged Mayor Schieve's stipulation and noted that she had two questions. She referred to Ms. Echeverria's mention of the new emergency alert system and complimented it. She asked how phone numbers were added to the alert system and whether people had received the alerts. She referred to

Ms. Hannah Hoobyar's earlier testimony of having very little evacuation time during a wildfire incident. She wondered what Ms. Echeverria's thoughts were regarding Ms. Hoobyar's experiences. She acknowledged Ms. Echeverria's mention of roads going through an evacuation area and asked if she could provide the governing bodies with recommendations for the best practices to implement in their jurisdictions to address related concerns.

Councilmember Duerr reported that the City of Reno used the standard of two roads traveling in and out of an area. She noted that she recommended the Reno City Council implement a standard with three roads to accommodate the developments that occasionally have two roads out but only one that comes in. She provided an example of traffic accumulating on Ridgeview Drive, which led to bottlenecks commonly occurring at the intersection of South McCarran Boulevard and Plumas Street. She rephrased her questions by asking how the alert system worked and what Ms. Echeverria's thoughts were on Ms. Hoobyar's concerns, as well as whether Ms. Echeverria had any evacuation planning recommendations for the members of the governing bodies.

Division Chief Ancho responded by informing Councilmember Duerr that he and Ms. Echeverria had discussed conducting an evacuation model study. He noted that they received a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) grant that included the option to do an evacuation study. He indicated they would keep the option to conduct that study under consideration. He emphasized that the region had multiple areas of egress and ingress, but the geography had to be regarded. He stressed that improvements and additions of egress or ingress to certain neighborhoods could still exist despite the geographical limitations. He stated that collaborations with Home Owners Associations (HOAs) and communities could facilitate those efforts in the future.

Ms. Echeverria appreciated the questions and reported having recently spoken with the planning team that week about whether they should have three egress and ingress routes or if two were satisfactory. She noted that the planning team had indicated that connectivity should be the goal as it considered how that would work in each neighborhood. She stated that WCEM was in communication with their fire partners and different jurisdictions to receive input on the issue. She noted that progress would be made on addressing those concerns and indicated her appreciation for support when that work began.

Ms. Echeverria addressed Councilmember Duerr's question regarding Ms. Hoobyar's experience with emergency alerts during evacuations and reported that WCEM used a different alert system during the Davis Fire. She acknowledged that the previous emergency alert program was known to have issues and ultimately was the cause for WCEM transitioning to a different program altogether. She reflected that she had never seen such a change approved so quickly. She opined that there were always challenges with alerts and provided those challenges as the reason for WCEM using all technological means available, including radio, television, cell phones, and landlines. She gave the example of inconsistencies in technology, such as when a text message could be received on one side of the room but was delivered when relocating to the other side of the room. She

acknowledged that those inconsistencies were very frustrating. She noted that when she communicated with the public, she ensured that they understood the challenges with technological communication, had multiple means of receiving emergency alerts and information, and remained aware. She noted that those factors were integrated into the verbiage WCEM often used, which included recommendations to have a kit, make a plan, and stay informed. She emphasized that cell phones were not infallible, and communications could be interrupted or halted by impacted cell phone towers or citizens being in an area with disrupted cell service.

Councilmember Duerr asked Ms. Echeverria if she considered the new emergency alert system to be better than its predecessor.

Ms. Echeverria reported that she had not seen or heard of any issues from the WCEM partners that adopted the new alert system, including Carson City and Douglas County. She noted that the system was used in California. She speculated that it would be interesting to hear what experiences would be described and how they related to the new emergency alert system in the after-action review of the incidents in California. Councilmember Duerr thanked Ms. Echeverria.

Reno City Councilmember Meghan Ebert stated that she had often heard concerns from constituents about evacuations from the North Valleys area as the region was significantly large and only had two access points from United States (US) Route 395, with limited lanes traveling each way, and North Virginia Street. She asked if any plans accounted for the North Valleys area. She emphasized that the region housed a large community with access to only two lanes on US Route 395 and one lane on North Virginia Street. She reflected on the wildfire that burned on Peavine Mountain and noted that she personally evacuated as a result. She reported that during the wildfire, she received several texts during the day regarding the spread of the evacuation zone. She said she left the area before she was in a mandatory evacuation zone and noted that the fire had not traveled especially close to her location. She speculated that she would not have been able to leave without those two occurrences due to the significant road congestion. She asked again if any plans had evaluated large areas with restricted access.

Ms. Echeverria emphasized that those situations were particularly why WCEM wanted to conduct an evacuation study. She stated that WCEM hoped to bring in a third party with subject matter experts who could review road capacity, potential projects, and ingress or egress based on population using specific data. She reiterated that WCEM intended to identify the areas with more difficulties to address those experiences. She stressed that evacuees needed to set realistic expectations, as it was expected that there would be traffic during an evacuation. She provided the Caldor Fire as an example of traffic challenges during an evacuation. She acknowledged that the traffic was less than ideal, and WCEM staff subsequently evaluated the gaps in the process afterward and were prepared to do better next time. She reported that there were no injuries or loss of life from that evacuation despite the substantial time the evacuation had taken. She emphasized the importance of personal preparedness and being mindful of maintaining enough gas in personal vehicles to be ready for evacuation in the event of an emergency. She reiterated

that WCEM was interested in conducting an evacuation study to identify those issues further and improve future response as a community.

Councilmember Ebert indicated that she hoped to ensure that the North Valleys area, in particular, was being considered. She acknowledged that evacuees passed away in their vehicles during the 2018 Camp Fire in Paradise, California. She noted that her constituency regularly raised concerns regarding the lack of road access and exhaustive plans for events that prompted evacuations. She said the only plan for those in the region was to deal with traffic as much as possible and attempt to leave the area. She reiterated her desire to know if the study would specifically evaluate the North Valleys area.

Ms. Echeverria clarified that the evacuation study would be conducted for the entirety of Washoe County. She referred to Division Chief Ancho's previous mention of the CWPP grant and noted that WCEM hoped to include the City of Reno and possibly the City of Sparks in that grant.

Councilmember Ebert asked if the study's results would be communicated to agencies such as the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) or the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC).

Ms. Echeverria referred to the slide from her presentation titled *Partners* and noted that every partnered organization included on the slide was invited to every WCEM planning event and study. She emphasized that WCEM wanted those partners present at those gatherings as they served as subject matter experts. She asserted that WCEM staff had no interest in squandering time or resources by conducting a non-exhaustive study without considering expert opinions. She expressed that WCEM staff were not setting a pretense by voicing a desire to conduct an evacuation study and stressed that they genuinely wanted to do better for the communities they served. She acknowledged that she and Councilmember Ebert had both experienced evacuations and described the fear evacuations caused, regardless of whether preparedness measures were taken. She elaborated that WCEM intended to achieve a level significantly higher than the minimum efforts to ensure the community remained safe.

Councilmember Ebert hoped NDOT and the RTC would consider those factors and utilize them for incorporation into future design. She thanked Ms. Echeverria.

Mayor Schieve thanked Ms. Echeverria for her work and appreciated Division Chief Ancho for his service. She noted that she had only just heard that an evacuation study would need to be conducted and asked whether there were already plans in place for evacuation and related procedures. She indicated an interest in seeing an after-action report that evaluated successes and failures, as she had not received one. She noted her uncertainty about whether that information was communicated elsewhere and stated that she did not intend to cast any blame. She noted that she was unaware they had operated different emergency alert systems before Ms. Echeverria mentioned the topic in response to Councilmember Duerr's question. She opined that such things needed to be addressed beforehand when governing bodies were trying to make relevant decisions to assess what

governing bodies could assist WCEM with. Mayor Schieve reiterated her desire for Ms. Echeverria to clarify her previously mentioned concerns regarding the intent to conduct the evacuation study. She emphasized her reason for asking by posing a hypothetical question of what would happen if an event occurred the next day. She opined that those things needed to be addressed that day.

Ms. Echeverria clarified that WCEM did have an evacuation plan at that time. Mayor Schieve noted that she had not heard that mentioned earlier and asked if anyone else had.

Ms. Echeverria elaborated that the evacuation plan differed from the intended evacuation study. She reported that WCEM operated on 92 plans, which they trained and planned for.

Mayor Schieve asked if WCEM was ready to respond if an event occurred.

Ms. Echeverria confirmed that WCEM was ready for an event. She explained that WCEM trained consistently for that and acknowledged that in the past year, WCEM staff had many practical opportunities to put those evacuation plans into practice. She referred to the evacuation exercise in Incline Village to test that training at the highest level. She described the different levels of training exercises, which ranged from table-talk exercises that consisted of staff talking through the scenarios of an event to having people in the field to simulate actions from the plans by knocking on doors, practicing alerts, informing participants of their designated shelter locations, and holding preparedness fairs.

Mayor Schieve attested that she and the community wanted to know that WCEM was prepared for emergency events. She indicated that she became nervous whenever she heard studies and other similar efforts mentioned, as they often took considerable time and were favored by the government.

Ms. Echeverria reiterated that WCEM had a plan in place but acknowledged that the plan needed to be updated. She elaborated that a study would be necessary in order to implement those upgrades at the highest level possible, as the governing bodies had mentioned that the community was growing and entirely new neighborhoods had been developed. She suggested that if WCEM utilized Census data, the data might be skewed due to the lack of consideration given to the drastic changes in population during events and the visitors to the region. She noted that those were factors the WCEM hoped to incorporate.

Mayor Schieve assented that the WCEM just needed to update the plans they already had. She noted her appreciation for the clarification and asked how long the study would take and how long they would need to wait for the results.

Ms. Echeverria noted that the timeline varied and depended on how quickly the funding was identified and the data were collected from the community. She reported

that Nevada County in California had done a similar study, which took one year to complete. Mayor Schieve thanked Ms. Echeverria.

Reno City Councilmember Kathleen Taylor thanked Ms. Echeverria and all of their partners for attending the meeting. She noted that the question she received from constituents was how they could plan, prepare, and mitigate for things that happened in neighborhoods and regions that were not theirs. She acknowledged that Ms. Echeverria might have presented on the topic already. She asked what was being done locally to ensure they were prepared and planned as appropriately as possible in response to the wildfires in southern California.

Ms. Echeverria asked Councilmember Taylor whether she was referring to potential actions on the individual level.

Councilmember Taylor clarified that she wanted to know how they were planning and preparing for hazards as a region.

Ms. Echeverria indicated that, besides what she had discussed during the presentation, WCEM worked with their partners in affected areas to learn about their specific challenges. She noted that WCEM visited Paradise, California, following the 2018 Camp Fire, assessed their topography and fuels, discussed with their different first responders to identify the challenges that they had faced, and investigated how those challenges could be avoided locally. She stressed that understanding the differences between regions was critical. She elaborated that the information they learned from events in neighboring regions could be tailored to approach mitigation activities in local communities to reduce those impacts. She attested that there were efforts that could be undertaken as an individual as well, such as creating defensible space. She reported that WCEM staff conducted a thorough investigation as to why the houses that withstood the wildfires in Los Angeles (L.A.) had survived so they could understand the contributing factors and speak to them, which she noted was the role of the planning team.

Councilmember Taylor paraphrased Ms. Echeverria's response to confirm that WCEM was looking outside of the region at additional hazards for the information to be brought back and tailored to create a suitable and specific approach for the local community.

Ms. Echeverria confirmed that was the case and divulged that in addition to her role at Washoe County, she also worked for the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) as the Region 9 State Liaison. She reported that Region 9 consisted of essentially the entire West Coast. She noted that in that role, she learned the best practices from each of the states within Region 9 and attended the International Emergency Managers Conference to meet her partners from around the world and discuss with them the best practices in their areas that could subsequently be incorporated locally.

Councilmember Taylor thanked Ms. Echeverria.

Division Chief Ancho emphasized that training was ongoing, whether it be through tabletop exercises or more full-scale, comprehensive exercises. He noted that those exercises were typically based on events from other places across the Nation, especially significant events with specific hazards, such as the wildfires in L.A. He acknowledged that those exercises were commonly perceived as unrealistic, and the purpose of undertaking those training drills was often questioned, but he asserted that they trained for events that should not happen. He noted that while they trained on basic procedures and operations throughout the year across different agencies, when they organized a training exercise for a regional event, the event typically simulated a significant incident that might be considered unrealistic. He reiterated that they trained for events that were far more impactful than would be expected.

Reno City Councilmember Brandi Anderson asked how individual members of the governing bodies could help Ms. Echeverria and Division Chiefs Ancho and Means become more quickly prepared in the coming year to address the wildfire season.

Ms. Echeverria answered that in addition to the actions listed on the final two slides of her presentation titled *How Elected Officials Can Help* and *How Elected Officials Can Help (cont.)*, members of the governing bodies could recognize that WCEM requested necessary resources for the reasons she explained in her presentation to strategically address gaps in the region and not for a project that was made up. She noted that the resource they needed for the desired evacuation study was funding. She acknowledged that she had worked in her jurisdiction with County Manager Eric Brown and the BCC to identify the appropriate funding to make that happen. She stressed that she had not referred to funding for everything. She emphasized the importance of knowing what WCEM staff did, how they carried out those actions, what their processes were, and collaborative communication. She opined that she had been lucky to visit Emmitsburg, Maryland, to participate in a community-wide disaster training event with Chair Hill and Sparks City Councilmember Charlene Bybee. She believed the event was helpful and noted that Chair Hill and Councilmember Bybee could speak to their experiences individually. She attested that their understanding of emergency management was doing what was supposed to be done in a coordinated way to take care of their communities. She noted that WCEM was open to improvement if they identified ways or processes for improvement. She reiterated that the primary opportunity for members of the governing bodies to assist WCEM staff was by understanding what WCEM did and what was happening in the community, as everything was coordinated. She stressed the importance of being able to present that information to the public in a digestible way to prepare them for what might happen.

Division Chief Ancho added that more collective and individual training could be conducted. He referred to Ms. Echeverria's earlier mention of REOC interface training and training specifically for elected officials in a policy group to demonstrate how their roles coordinated with those of emergency management staff during a disaster. He noted that those training classes had been offered in the past and opined that although people were busy, offering those classes more frequently would be beneficial. He reiterated



the importance of involving as many people in elected positions as possible in those classes to reveal how their roles worked collaboratively. He elaborated that the participants of the training event conducted in Emmitsburg, Maryland, witnessed in real-time the coherence between emergency management staff working in field activities with elected officials in policy groups. He stressed that the implementation of more training would be a major step.

Ms. Echeverria invited the members of the governing bodies to visit WCEM at the REOC when there were no ongoing disasters. Mayor Schieve reported that she had constantly heard not to go to the REOC. Ms. Echeverria noted that the best practice was for elected officials not to be at the REOC during disasters. She stated that it would be very beneficial for elected officials to visit on days without disasters to see how the REOC was organized, what was being conducted, and what WCEM was set up to accomplish.

Mayor Schieve stated that the City of Reno had no additional questions.

Chair Hill acknowledged that she had received text communication, which notified her that the sound quality of the meeting being transmitted to the community was poor.

County Clerk Jan Galassini clarified that the sound quality depended on the platform used to access the audio, as reports differed. She noted that some individuals reported that the audio quality was not impacted, while others stated that there was an overlay of different voices, which obscured who was speaking. She suggested a brief pause might be necessary to fix the audio issues.

Chair Hill asked if that was the action that Ms. Galassini recommended, and asked if the meeting would start again afterward with questions from the representatives of the City of Sparks.

Ms. Galassini agreed with what was suggested by Chair Hill.

Chair Hill noted that the issue had been resolved and directed the conversation to Sparks Mayor Ed Lawson, who invited the Sparks City Council to voice questions or comments.

Sparks City Councilmember Donald Abbott stated he had several questions and commended WCEM staff for their work in pursuing partnerships with Pershing County, Elko County, Nye County, Lyon County, and Humboldt County. He expressed that he would have never thought those partnerships would be considered in Washoe County. He noted Ms. Echeverria's earlier mention of being more prepared by ensuring enough gas was stored within personal vehicles. He reflected that during the Davis Fire, he photographed a wedding in the Arrowcreek area but was running late and decided not to fill his gas tank. He reported that when he received the alert directing him to leave the area, he found that the gas station was already closed. He recognized that he had made a bad choice that day and asked if there was the ability to include power outages from NV Energy

on the evacuation map. He asked if that category was already listed and noted that he did not remember seeing that information when he looked for it on the day he evacuated.

Ms. Echeverria stated that information on power outages was not included in the Perimeter map but could be found on DoRA. She reported that WCEM implemented NV Energy's map for power outages onto DoRA and explained that a tab for additional resources could be found at the end of the dashboard, which included a direct link to the NV Energy website.

Councilmember Abbott stated that the information was good to know and noted that he had a couple more questions. He acknowledged that Ms. Echeverria had mentioned the REOC and suggested that the center presented a great opportunity. He commended the work of Cyndi Boggan, Executive Assistant at the Sparks City Manager's Office. He suggested that Ms. Echeverria contact Ms. Boggan or have Ms. Boggan contact WCEM staff to schedule a visit to the REOC on a day without any incidents, as he had never been to the facility.

Councilmember Abbott recalled that Ms. Echeverria had previously mentioned that agencies in California had utilized Perimeter and asked if any other places in the US utilized the program. He asked if, for example, he would be able to access Perimeter while in another state, such as Missouri, and noted that he had recently looked and could only see sandbag locations in Washoe County.

Ms. Echeverria clarified that if an individual visited a link to Perimeter with the word *Washoe* in the title of the web address, the map would only depict Washoe County. She noted that more areas would be visible if the primary web address of Perimetermap.com was visited. She confirmed that California was included and showed information all around Lake Tahoe, with the exception of Placer County, which utilized a different system. She reported that L.A. was also on a different system during the previous wildfires in that area. She noted that WCEM compared the map system utilized in L.A. to the program utilized locally during those wildfires. She attested that the Perimeter system in Washoe County had better information and tools for the public to use. She reported that Perimeter was expanding its service. She recognized that the County was only as resilient as the neighboring regions and explained that WCEM was working to share the Perimeter program with anyone in the State who was interested. She noted that WCEM had conducted a Statewide continuity of operations plan for the region.

Councilmember Bybee reflected on her amazement from participating in the community-wide disaster training event held in Emmitsburg, Maryland, several years prior. She noted that she had asked herself what she was doing there during the event as an elected official with staff from fields such as firefighting, dispatch, and emergency management in attendance. She stated that she realized the importance of being a policymaker and commended the staff who conducted the training event, acknowledging that some of those individuals still worked in the emergency management field. She reflected on being told by the staff from the training event that they invited different cities annually to attend the real-life training exercises but had never had participants at the event

who performed so collaboratively and at such a high level, especially considering that the participants consisted of individuals from three jurisdictions, had different career backgrounds in various fields, and were not well-acquainted with each other's job responsibilities. She emphasized that at the time, their group was described as one of the most outstanding teams that had attended those training exercises. She expressed that the ability to work so well together with the different participants gave her a lot of confidence in the local emergency management system and made her feel very good. She opined that emergency management training and emergency sessions being opened to elected officials to see what was done by emergency management staff had been extremely helpful for all of the elected officials and for the region.

Mayor Lawson asked if Sparks City Councilmember Joe Rodriguez wanted to add anything to the conversation but received an indication that he did not.

Chair Hill noted that before the governing bodies moved on from Agenda Item B1, Commissioner Clark expressed a desire to express thoughts prompted by the earlier discussion.

Commissioner Clark explained that other things had come to mind when they had discussed the topic of evacuations. He described evacuation as the idea of someone wanting to get away from something and putting distance between themselves and whatever incident might be underway. He acknowledged that the discussion was focused on fire but stated that much more was involved, such as the potential brought forward by major interstates and highways traveling through the area, the airport with the risk of airplane collisions, or emergencies related to a railroad tank car of different chemicals. He emphasized that evacuations were done to get the public away from harm.

Commissioner Clark reflected on his personal experience with the Davis Fire, which he noted was shortly followed by the Callahan Fire. He reported that it took him approximately 45 minutes to travel two miles to reach the evacuation center, which was set up at the South Valleys Library. He described the difficulties of moving people out of an area when there was a lack of power, causing the signal lights to fail or operate in a way that only allowed a few cars to travel at a time, despite open lanes being used by no vehicles or significant traffic backing up other lanes. He noted that he had previously suggested that there were not enough Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers or Sheriff's Deputies available to man every intersection. He emphasized that there was a need for more people to physically stand in to direct traffic, make decisions, and move people along to prevent relying on unreliable traffic signals that were not guaranteed to work. He opined that when an individual was evacuating, they would want to get away quickly and safely, not remaining in traffic while one of the other lanes on the road was left empty. He reiterated his belief that having people present to direct traffic at the scene would help the evacuation process. He noted that he had personally witnessed those measures taken in the past and suggested that the CERT volunteers and those affiliated with the Reno Police Department's (RPD) Senior Auxiliary Volunteer Effort (SAVE) could be helpful in those efforts. He opined that addressing the need to get evacuees through congested intersections should be a part of the training for those who

would assist in the evacuation efforts to prevent the need to rely on traffic moving at a pace of three to four cars at a time. He concluded by noting that he had only wanted to bring the issue to Ms. Echeverria's attention.

Ms. Echeverria indicated her appreciation for Commissioner Clark's comment and any opportunity to bring attention to local volunteer organizations. She reported that CERT trained their volunteers in traffic management and engaged them during the Davis Fire. She emphasized that people should not travel to or drive into areas under evacuation with the threat of a hazard. She noted that driving into those areas would complicate the traffic pattern and attested that if evacuees were headed out of the area, it could be expected that it would take longer to get into the area, as nobody aside from first responders was meant to enter an evacuation zone. She expressed that she could not speak directly about Commissioner Clark's experience but theorized that the flow of traffic going into the area might have been the reason why it took longer to reach the destination. She acknowledged that the South Valleys Library's temporary evacuation point was very quickly changed to the Washoe County Senior Services Center, as it was not open. She explained that she had not broached the topic due to Commissioner Clark's statement alone, as she noted that TMFPD partners had previously mentioned citizens driving toward a fire or danger to investigate it, photograph it, generate social media engagement, or for many other possible reasons. She emphasized that she was not suggesting that Commissioner Clark had any of those motives in his efforts to reach the evacuation point but expressed that such incidents had been known to have occurred in the past with citizens. She reminded the community not to head towards danger for any reason if they did not have to.

Commissioner Clark clarified that he was not heading toward danger and reflected that he was traveling toward the designated evacuation point. He suggested the governing bodies consider the situation as if nobody was there to act as spectators and that all those traveling in the area were present only to evacuate from the area but were prevented from leaving their neighborhoods due to reliance on a traffic device programmed only for standard conditions. He emphasized that the situation differed during evacuations, with many people attempting to leave an area. He opined that the traffic lights did not understand or differentiate between those situations, which demonstrated the importance of having people on site who could actively think and direct traffic out of an area. He noted that in a perfect situation, no bystanders would be present exclusively in an evacuation zone to take pictures of an incident. He clarified that he was instead referring to individuals who experienced situations such as being trapped in cul-de-sacs and neighborhoods during evacuations due to others waiting at traffic lights, which operated as if conditions were normal. He emphasized that there was additional chaos in those situations if the traffic lights were unavailable due to a lack of power, and no active citizens were present to direct traffic. He reiterated his belief that incorporating traffic direction into training would ultimately be helpful if possible.

Division Chief Ancho reported that law enforcement was actively involved in every evacuation, assisting individuals in evacuating by going door to door and controlling as many streets and intersections as possible. He noted that any typical

emergency was expected to initially have resources overwhelmed immediately, which led to additional time needed for CERT or more officers from the County or the Cities of Reno and Sparks to come to an impacted area. He acknowledged the frustration caused by those delays. He opined that there was always a better way and stated that the issue was something that would be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Clark reiterated the need to involve more people to be physically present in the field. He reflected that he had been involved in three evacuations in Washoe Valley and had noticed that at each of those evacuations, he witnessed sheriffs posted at intersections to prevent individuals from re-entering evacuation zones rather than to direct traffic for those leaving. He asserted that while the sheriffs might assist individuals with making it through the initial traffic jam, there were other places along the routes taken by evacuees where traffic was congested. He noted that those areas of congestion were where they needed to ensure that traffic remained moving to save human lives.

Chair Hill reported that Mayor Lawson informed her that Councilmember Rodriguez requested to present a question. Mayor Lawson directed Councilmember Rodriguez to ask his question.

Councilmember Rodriguez noted that he intended to expand upon the topics introduced by Commissioner Clark. He referred to Nevada Senator Skip Daly's earlier request to know what the governing bodies needed to realize the regionalization efforts and opined that additional State resources would be needed. He reported that he additionally worked as an employee of the State of Nevada during the Davis Fire evacuations as a Search and Rescue Sergeant. He reflected that the evacuations occurred on a Saturday, so no employees from NDOT were present to assist. He noted that the efforts were carried out by a few troopers covering areas spanning Fallon, Reno, Minden, Gardnerville, and Lake Tahoe. He described that evacuation operations were a priority. He reported having ordered any available State resources, including law enforcement officers, game wardens, and park rangers. He noted that he had received responses from individuals in Winnemucca due to the lack of State resources. He stated that as a collective governing body, they would need to communicate regarding the unavailability of resources when looking for State partners, as the State of Nevada did not have enough resources available. He reported that the State of Nevada had approximately 300 troopers covering the entire State and even fewer NDOT employees. He asserted that controlling traffic and ensuring evacuees could be transported out of an area was the job of NDOT. He opined that with five State troopers covering the entire local region, that was not the answer. He attested that the conversations at that point in the meeting had been great and expressed that he was hopeful that relevant discussions among the governing bodies would be raised with Senator Daly.

Chair Hill thanked Councilmember Rodriguez and asked Mayor Schieve if she had any last thoughts to present for the City of Reno.

Mayor Schieve stated that Councilmember Rodriguez had brought forward a great point and opined that even during snowstorms, there were not enough NDOT employees available to provide assistance. She suspected that people did not understand

what NDOT was responsible for compared to what was overseen by the County and Cities of Reno and Sparks. She elaborated by providing the example of people not knowing that McCarran Boulevard was designated as a State highway. She reflected on people calling her to ask questions and express frustrations regarding McCarran Boulevard, despite that road not being under the jurisdiction of the City of Reno. She expressed gratitude to Councilmember Rodriguez for mentioning State resources. She described that was something at the State level that all members of the governing boards should be collaborating on to better understand what that looked like. She reported that State resources had been extremely challenging during events. She commended Councilmember Rodriguez for his comments.

Councilmember Ebert asked Division Chief Ancho and Ms. Echeverria if they engaged or assisted with local snow preparedness through efforts such as brining roads before major snowstorms. She described her intention for asking as wanting to think of additional resources that were not needed daily but would be helpful sometimes.

Division Chief Ancho stated that that was not typically a question of emergency management.

Councilmember Ebert acknowledged her understanding of that being atypical but reflected on a major snowstorm in February a few years prior. She noted that it was extremely icy and had been a big problem. She asserted that sometimes extra help was necessary, as they did not have enough resources to address everything. She stated that there were incidents, such as vehicles sliding off the road, which demonstrated the need for assistance in prevention.

Division Chief Ancho noted that finding those resources when needed was one of the primary roles of emergency management staff. He elaborated that emergency management staff could communicate concerns about a lack of vehicles able to lay down brine on the roads and request assistance in obtaining them.

Councilmember Ebert rephrased her question and asked if emergency management could assist the governing bodies in increasing coordination for incidents that might not be as imperative as a burning building but could still cause larger problems if precautions are not taken ahead of time, such as an impending big storm.

Ms. Echeverria agreed and noted that emergency management teams always worked with public works staff, and WCEM consistently worked with the Community Services Department (CSD) crews to ensure they had what was needed. She referred to Division Chief Ancho's previous comments. She noted that they worked to identify if those departments required more resources, what exactly was needed, and what that process would look like. She stated that they were set up and coordinated during the storm mentioned by Councilmember Duerr. She believed they had also hosted a warming center during that storm. She described that things were happening, but the weather could not be stopped altogether. She suggested that the impacts from the ice might outweigh the efforts to address it, and there was not much emergency management staff could do in that case.

She reported that they had been asked in the past if alert messages could be sent out to inform citizens that US 395 South was closed and to not enter Washoe Valley due to the number of vehicle accidents making conditions unsafe for first responders. She assured Councilmember Ebert that when a request came from a community partner, they would do their best to come through for them and ensure that safety was communicated.

Chair Hill asked if there were any additional comments or questions from the members of the governing bodies before Agenda Item B1 was closed and noted that she had not seen any indication there were. She thanked Ms. Echeverria and complimented her on the conversation. She opined that the governing bodies were lucky to have both Division Chief Ancho and Ms. Echeverria supporting their efforts with incredible teams behind them, including those who could not attend the meeting. She acknowledged that emergency management staff had an approach that spanned the entire region, and they worked hard every day. She thanked them again for their service and assured them that the governing bodies would continue to investigate how they could support them.

**25-043F**      **AGENDA ITEM B2** Discussion and potential direction to staff regarding current and future regional fire efforts. Potential direction includes but is not limited to pursuit of interlocal agreements or other consolidation plans among the cities and county and other participating entities, support of pertinent consolidation legislation during the 2025 legislative session, review of funding sources and impacts to levels of service, and development of a consolidation study to fully assess needs and costs.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) interim Fire Chief Dale Way greeted Chair Hill, Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve, Sparks Mayor Ed Lawson, the Commissioners and Councilmembers, and his fellow managers. He conducted a PowerPoint presentation with the following titles: Current & Future Regional Fire Efforts; Regional Successes - 2002-2012; Regional Successes - Present; Regional Successes; Ongoing Regional Efforts; Future Regional Opportunities; Recommended Motion.

Interim Fire Chief Way expressed his appreciation for all of the firefighters in the TMFPD and the Cities of Reno and Sparks' Fire Departments who continued to exhibit professionalism in their responses to one another or to one another's jurisdictions.

Interim Fire Chief Way referred to the slide titled *Regional Successes – 2002-2012* and indicated that the slide revealed that funding issues were the reason why the Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC) originally decided to move away from the contract for services. He noted that the source of that information was from the City of Reno and Washoe County's response to Assembly Bill 494 (AB494) that was prepared in 2010. The image on the slide was taken from that response and showed terms for different levels of cooperation efforts compared to their difficulty level. Interim Fire Chief Way noted that the lowest difficulty level was associated with the term *cooperation*, and the highest difficulty level was described by the term *consolidation*.

Interim Fire Chief Way reflected that he had come from a region in Southern Nevada that utilized unrestricted automatic aid that had been in use for over four decades, long before the automatic Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and automatic vehicle locators. He recounted that he had been in a state of shock when he first moved to Northern Nevada and found that the service delivery model was extremely different from his previous experience. He opined that the inefficiencies of a battalion chief having to call a neighboring battalion chief to receive mutual aid demonstrated an antiquated way of providing fire services and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to the citizenry. He asked what problem was resolved by consolidating the fire agencies that would not be solved by the implementation of unrestrictive automatic CAD amongst all agencies.

Interim Fire Chief Way referred to the slide titled *Regional Successes—Present* and asserted that with every endeavor came historical research. He reported conducting that research by pulling from AB494, authored in August 2010, in response to the 76th Session of the Nevada Legislature, which directed both Washoe and Clark County to look within their regions and cities to identify cost-saving measures in response to the recession. He reiterated that the graphic on the slide depicted an indication that cooperation was the easiest thing to achieve amongst agencies. He reported that in 2012, the second most easily achievable effort, *Contract for Services*, had ended, and the agencies went to none of the efforts listed on the chart. He noted that from 2015 to 2017, there was forced legislation for automatic aid only related to fires, but upon that ending, the agencies returned to undergoing none of the efforts listed on the chart. He emphasized that it had taken the agencies seven to eight years to return to the first step on the chart, cooperation. He described cooperation as nothing more than two agencies working together to achieve efficiency or reduce costs, as defined by the 2010 joint response to AB494.

Interim Fire Chief Way reported that since the return to the first step of cooperation, they were already seeing significant success and efficiency in service delivery to the citizens of the region. He opined that it was through that cooperation model that the four distinct entities in Southern Nevada provided seamless service into neighboring and adjoining jurisdictions with no afterthought of whose jurisdiction the call originated from. He noted that the cooperation was about providing the fastest, most efficient, and most effective service delivery of fire and EMS services to any citizen in the area. He recounted that when he lived in the City of Las Vegas, the closest fire station to his neighborhood was the City of North Las Vegas Fire Station, which he noted responded every time a neighbor called for 911 services. He elaborated that the system they had built-in automatic move-ups from one station to others, including a different entity occupying a different jurisdiction's station when large incidents occurred. He reflected on an instance involving one of the TMFPD's division chiefs who formerly worked for North Las Vegas Fire at the time of the Monte Carlo Fire, which occurred at the far southern end of the Las Vegas Strip. He explained that during that incident, the employee had been moved from his location near the central-north portion of Las Vegas to a City of Las Vegas fire station. He noted that the employee was pulled into the incident on the fourth alarm and moved from one end of the Las Vegas Valley to the other.



Interim Fire Chief Way noted that TMFPD had worked cooperatively with the City of Sparks for many years with an enhanced automatic aid agreement with untold successes. He opined that moving to unrestricted automatic aid reduced response times through the elimination of boundaries and the use of CAD and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), reduced the impact on citizens by receiving care for medical aid events faster, resulted in fires being fought faster which would ultimately end up being smaller and causing less damage, and reduced risk to first responders by having them travel less distance to respond to each call. He noted that travel posed a major risk for injury to both staff and civilians. He emphasized that those reductions saved everyone by having less loss in the community with no additional cost to taxpayers.

Interim Fire Chief Way highlighted the successes the TMFPD experienced since moving to the recent automatic aid agreement with the City of Reno on November 18, 2024. He reported that they had experienced success every day in reducing response times by dispatching the closest unit to that call. He stated that they had already recognized some issues with the model that was previously in use and made adjustments to approve within the first 90 days, with more improvements to come. He emphasized that while there were many success stories, he wanted to highlight several that occurred recently, which resulted in the prevention of significant loss of life or injury. He reported that the first story occurred on November 22, 2024, four days after the automatic aid agreement went into place. He described the incident as a pediatric cardiac arrest involving an unresponsive 18-month-old child found in a hot tub who was pulled out, resuscitated, and made a full recovery with no neurological deficits. He noted that the incident's response resulted in a person being able to go on to live a normal life because the closest unit was dispatched. He stated that the second story took place on November 26, 2024, only eight days after the automatic aid agreement was implemented and involved a structure fire in Reno. He recounted that TMFPD units arrived, established command, and worked seamlessly with Reno Fire Department (RFD) units to confine a fire to a wall around a fireplace. He described an event on January 15, 2025, where two motor vehicles collided in a head-on accident with extrication. He reported that RFD arrived first on the scene and began to extinguish the vehicle that was on fire, and TMFPD arrived second and began extricating people from the other vehicle. He noted that there were examples of other incidents that had occurred, but he wanted to highlight those stories as he believed they were the most integral to that automatic aid agreement.

Interim Fire Chief Way indicated that he wanted to compare the Davis Fire to the wildfires in Los Angeles (L.A.). He noted that from his perspective, the local region mounted a very good response to what could have potentially been a very bad fire through the work of their crews and, in part, luck from the weather not being as bad as anticipated. He emphasized that their crews had done exceptional work for two entire days ahead of that weather to create fire lines that held. He reiterated that the preferred results could be attributed entirely to the work of those crews.

Interim Fire Chief Way reported that the final stages of integrating the regional CAD software were being worked through at that time and noted that the new CAD software would allow for the various dispatch centers to locate and dispatch the

closest units to incidents. He suggested that the implementation would be completed and go live in September or October of 2025. He described that implementation as another example of cooperation in improving the fire and EMS service delivery for the region. He opined that there should be no boundaries when responding to incidents that impact people's lives and the threat of fire within the region. He recommended that the governing bodies explore and implement all cooperative efforts available to them, starting with full unrestricted automatic aid and changing the operational policies of the organizations that had previously prevented that cooperation. He suggested that those efforts were the factors that would improve service delivery to all of the citizenry. He expressed that TMFPD would look forward to continued cooperation with its partners.

The City of Sparks Fire Chief, Walt White, introduced himself and continued the PowerPoint presentation by reviewing the slide with the title *Regional Successes*.

Fire Chief White referred to the slide *Regional Successes* and indicated his intent to continue the discussion by reviewing the successes in the region. He noted that the operational response was integrated as all fire agencies provided the same five essential services of fire suppression, emergency medical service, hazardous materials (HAZMAT) mitigation, technical rescue, and community risk reduction. He elaborated that those five essential services were a collaborative effort and were provided with pride. He described unified command as an essential part of the incident command system and reported that one of the more recent fires that occurred behind Hug High School in Sparks in June of 2024, the Sullivan Fire, though not exceedingly large and ultimately burning approximately 128 acres, was approached under a unified command as the fire impacted multiple jurisdictions. The Sullivan Fire technically began within a portion of TMFPD's jurisdiction but burned primarily at the edge of land overseen by the Sparks Fire Department (SFD) and into the territory of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). He reiterated that for that reason, a unified command was established with a representative of each of those agencies present in the command post and making decisions. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office was involved with TMFPD to investigate where the fire started and the cause of the incident. The Sheriff's Office was central in the primary responsibility of evacuations for such larger incidents. He opined that more robust discussions on evacuation plans should include the participation of Sheriff Darin Balaam.

Fire Chief White described the Joint Advisory Committee as each agency having a voice and a voting position regarding the EMS system. He opined that the implementation of the Public-Private Partnership (P3) with the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) to begin transporting ambulance services was the most impactful service enhancement that the City of Sparks has provided over the last decade. The City of Sparks provided that service approximately 50 years ago, but it was now reinstated. He reported that in a time frame of six months, the P3 ambulance service provided over 500 transports, dramatically reduced response times in the Wingfield Springs area, and dramatically reduced SFD's reliance on TMFPD for those services.

Fire Chief White referenced resource sharing and opined that the agencies were more than the sum of their parts. He described the regional TRIAD Hazmat Team, comprised of the RFD, the SFD, and TMFPD, to pool their resources and physical assets in an effort to mitigate HAZMAT incidents. He noted that the position of Regional Hazmat Coordinator was added in 2025 on the recommendation of previous assessments from evaluated exercises. He stated that the City of Sparks was happy to host that position as they started the process but noted that the position could rotate between each of the agencies involved in the regional team over time. He described the role of the individual in that position as ensuring the maintenance of recruitment for new membership, training efforts, and providing the tools and training that the regional team needed to be successful. He reiterated that only by pooling resources would each of the three agencies be capable of providing the highest level of HAZMAT mitigation response.

Fire Chief White referred to enhanced efficiencies such as the Mutual Aid Agreements and Automatic Aid Agreements, and opined that in those regards, they were likely part of one of the best Master Mutual Aid Systems for fire service in the Nation. He emphasized that the effort was not just a matter of giving, but also of what was received. He reflected on having served as a fire chief for over a decade and having been in the fire service for nearly 40 years and noted that he had the opportunity to be part of that mutual aid response or send resources to some of the largest, most destructive, and deadliest fires in the region, encompassing multiple states. He reported having sent personnel to multiple states over the last year, and stated that most recently, Scott Means, SFD Division Chief of Emergency Management, was sent to serve as strike team leader to take out a multi-agency strike team to assist with the Escalon Fire in L.A. The strike team did not just help to provide support in that well-defined system of search and call but also received support through those efforts as well. He noted the Davis Fire as an example of a multi-agency, large-scale activation of resources.

Fire Chief White emphasized that there was no single fire agency in Washoe County or perhaps the Nation that could handle all types of risks associated with the area on its own. He noted that the system was one that made the agencies extremely dependent and reliant upon one another. He reported having initially come from the Sacramento, California region, and noted that he had worked for an agency which at one point was 16 separate agencies. He stated that there was irony in the fact that when the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District became one entity, it was dealing with 16 different water purveyors, but Washoe County with multiple different fire agencies had only one primary water district, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA). He noted that TMWA had regionalized in an effort to do the responsible and right thing by sharing resources and assets. He stated that the recent wildfires in L.A. served as an example that a disaster event was a media event, and a media event was a political event. He opined that how well-organized they remained, how funded and resourced they were, and what type of organized and collaborative response they could provide were factors that would either bolster or undermine the public's confidence in appointed and elected officials in the region. He stated that he was a big advocate for exploring any and every opportunity, whether that was through Public-Public Partnerships or P3s to provide the highest level of service possible in the region.

The City of Reno Fire Chief, Dave Cochran, introduced himself to the governing bodies and continued the PowerPoint presentation by reviewing the slides with the following titles: Future Regional Opportunities and Recommended Motion.

Fire Chief Cochran noted that he intended to finish the presentation before he would turn the conversation back to the governing bodies for a discussion on future collaborative possibilities. He described the discussion as a self-actualization of the fire service and opined that they should be what they could be and asked how they could improve. He stated that the governing bodies had heard interim Fire Chief Way and Fire Chief White mention that the fire agencies worked very collaboratively, especially when physically in the field in the general area, at sites for fires, and at areas impacted by major incidents. He asked if, despite those collaborative efforts, the agencies could be better. He stated that he knew, in regard to himself and the RFD, and on behalf of both interim Fire Chief Way and Fire Chief White, that the agencies should always be looking to improve, and they should always be looking at what they could do better. He emphasized that their discussion at that meeting demonstrated an area where they could do better as a region to look more closely at those opportunities. He opined that Sparks Mayor Ed Lawson had made good points earlier at the meeting regarding the suggestion to consider all ideas, the mention that there were no bad ideas while brainstorming, and that every possibility should be kept in mind for consideration.

Fire Chief Cochran referred to the slide *Future Regional Efforts* and stated that the way the agencies operated at that time was certainly an improvement due to the expansion and enhancements of automatic aid. He asked if there were ways they could build on those expansions and enhancements, and noted the list included on the slide. He elaborated on the inclusion of the elimination of redundancies and noted that there were multiple departments. He opined that while the unrestricted automatic aid was great, the system at the time was clunky. He attributed that to the agencies being based in different centers and being on different systems. He noted that one of the successes that had not yet been mentioned was the regional CAD system, which he affirmed would be implemented and was on schedule to be completed in September of 2025. He emphasized that the completion of that system would not regionalize the agencies completely but would serve as a tool to work toward further regionalization efforts. He opined that if all agencies could utilize those shared systems, particularly shared dispatch, it could create occurrences where one dispatcher could access all the resources needed so they could be sent immediately to provide the proper resources to the right call at the correct time. Depending on what was needed, those resources could then be taken from the collective bodies to be sent to the corresponding incidents. He asserted that those efforts could trickle down to the lower levels as well and were not exclusively for events at the scale of the Davis Fire or the Pinehaven Fire in the Caughlin Ranch area. He provided a hypothetical example of a medical call where a region sent the closest resource to respond to that call but left a question of whether the next emergency medical call with a closer resource would be subject to being under a different jurisdiction. He opined that when all resources were instead shared under each jurisdiction, they could take from the shared resources and

respond to the following medical calls in a more efficient fashion that would ultimately serve the citizens of the region better.

Fire Chief Cochran acknowledged that he was applying the term *regional* in a very generic sense, but the definition and correction of what the region would ultimately include would be up to the collective governing bodies to provide. He described a hypothetical example of planned regional growth going towards the west in the Verdi area with a TMFPD station on that land, despite it being under the jurisdiction of the City of Reno, and noted that if the agencies were planning collectively, the TMFPD station could be used to serve that area despite the jurisdictional difference. He noted that there were examples of such overlap to the north, south, and east of the region.

Fire Chief Cochran emphasized that the regional planning benefits from regionalization would present one of many administrative efficiencies to take advantage of. If there were only one shared policy to train personnel on across agencies, they would be more efficient, safer, and more effective. He asked if they needed three different training divisions for three separate departments, or if they needed one collective training division. He opined that the answer was obvious and applied across the board at different levels of the various departments, such as at the administrative level.

Fire Chief Cochran noted that he had previously mentioned the opportunity for a shared dispatch system but reiterated his belief that the shared system served as the most vital element, as that would allow the agencies to access the necessary resources. He acknowledged that they had agreed that they would not reach the ultimate conclusion from the discussion at that meeting, but noted that a primary part of their ultimate goal should be implementing that shared dispatch so one dispatch center could access all available resources due to shared policies, a collective agreement, and combined resources to provide the most effective service to everyone in the region. He opined that those efforts would be the safest and best thing to do for the citizens, and thus for the fire service.

Chair Hill thanked Fire Chief Cochran and noted that there was one public commenter signed in to speak. She noted that typically, when the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) discussed a heavy topic, they went to public comment prior to proceeding with their own discussion amongst the Board. She reminded those present that they would be taking public comment at that time, and those interested should sign up. She looked to receive confirmation from the other governing bodies and received confirmation from both Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve and Mayor Lawson.

On the call for public comment, Barry Duplantis, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of REMSA, introduced himself and greeted the governing bodies. He recognized and thanked several members of REMSA's Board of Directors present at the meeting, including Ms. Shirley Roberts and Mr. Michael Pagni, among others. He noted that he could not say for certain whether those board members were present as there were so many in attendance at the meeting, including Ms. Cora Case, Mr. Derrick Glum from Saint Mary's Health Network, Mr. Chris Nicholas from Renown Regional Medical Center, Ms. Katie Grimm from Northern Nevada Medical Center, and Mr. Louis Test. He noted that several members of the REMSA staff were present as well, as they were very interested in

the topic of regionalization up for consideration at the meeting. He recounted that REMSA Health was established as a regionalized not-for-profit EMS provider at the direction of the Cities of Reno and Sparks and Washoe County to eliminate historically disaggregated EMS services and ensure centralized, high-quality, and timely responses to emergency and non-emergency medical calls for services in those communities. He stated that REMSA's regionalized structure enabled their EMS agency to answer, triage, and dispatch appropriate equipment and emergency medical care throughout the region regardless of boundaries. He noted that the regionalized service model additionally enabled strategic and effective deployment of healthcare resources throughout the entire region based on dynamic needs, which fluctuated routinely. He stated that in working as a regional partner, REMSA secured multiple accreditations, had been nationally and globally recognized, and served as an innovative and cost-effective model viewed worldwide. He said that REMSA also acted as an active participant in the new community dispatch system, which Mr. Duplantis noted had been commented on several times throughout the meeting. He expressed their pride in that system being expected to bring all medical, fire, and police dispatch into one common system, which would facilitate the dispatch of the closest available resources from 911 phone calls. He emphasized his desire to communicate that REMSA Health itself was evidence of the community benefits that regionalization could offer. He opined that the regionalization of EMS through REMSA approximately 40 years ago yielded great benefits for Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County.

Chair Hill thanked Mr. Duplantis and apologized that they had to be so strict on the time allotted for comments. She noted that his comments were appreciated.

Mr. Monty Turner greeted the governing bodies and indicated that he both believed and disbelieved in the topic being discussed. He opined that one of the problems that was present was dispatch. He expressed uncertainty about whether any members of the governing bodies had ever called 911, but noted that every time he called 911, he got nothing in response. He stated that something happened at a personal range he owned in South Washoe Valley. He reported calling 911 and being asked what the nearest cross street to the incident was, just for the call to be ended at that moment. He stated that the 911 dispatcher was going to send nobody. He reiterated that there was a need to fix dispatch and that 911 needed to be fixed somehow, as it did not work. He noted his past expressed frustration about private numbers. He reported that former TMFPD Fire Chief Charles Moore came to his property to do a Global Positioning System (GPS), but when he asked the dispatcher about it, he was told by the dispatcher that she did not do GPS, which ended their conversation. He stated that he did not know what to do and described an incident at his property several weeks prior where his neighbor was burning plastic, which caused smoke to come through his floorboards suddenly. He expressed that the incident had been scary. He reported having told his wife to call the fire department, but they only arrived 35 minutes later. He noted that the responder from the fire department drove up the street from the incident and informed Mr. Turner that he could not see what had been reported. Mr. Turner recounted that in response, he pulled the lower cover off of his crawlspace, and smoke poured out, which made him believe he had a fire burning underneath his house. He reiterated that his neighbor was burning plastic. He opined that another of his neighbors behind him was a fire hazard waiting to happen, and that it was bad, noting that another

attendee at the meeting had seen that. He described that one of his adjacent neighbors had juniper trees on their property but refused to get rid of them, as the neighbor argued they were living organisms. He stated that there were trees on that neighbor's property that would catch on fire instantly. Mr. Turner reported that he personally would cut the foliage around his property to do everything in his power to defend himself from a fire. He noted that he could not do much about his neighbor and expressed that he had mixed emotions. He recounted that many years ago, he had a stepsister who was killed in an incident on Sutro Street and North McCarran Boulevard because, despite having a new fire station put in on Sutro Street, personnel could not be dispatched to that area. He reported that they instead had to wait for a fire truck to arrive from a station on Mayberry Drive. He stated that at that time, he drove a three-axle wrecker tow truck located nearby and offered to use that vehicle to grab the back of the van involved in the incident and pull it out to be more easily accessed by paramedics to take her off the scene. He reported that the Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) had refused his offer as they had to wait for the fire department to arrive, and he stated that as a result, he had to watch her die. He stressed that the situation was not good. He reiterated that the dispatch needed to be fixed. He described a large chemical incident that occurred in Sparks many years ago when he was working as a driver for Loomis Transport, Inc. He noted that some older individuals would remember that incident. He indicated that the responders to the incident were ready for anything. He reported having been injured and subsequently taken to the hospital, where another individual involved in the incident was being treated beside him and ultimately passed away. He noted that they believed that he was the one who had died at the hospital, and the fire department was informed of that. He recounted that when he arrived to pick up his firearm after having it taken during the events following the incident, the fire chief at the time passed out because he could not believe Mr. Turner was standing before him. Mr. Turner stressed that it was so bad that it was thought he was only 45 minutes away from looking like the individual who was beside him at the hospital. He noted that SFD was on the scene without delay and expressed his disbelief. He said he had pictures of the newspaper and everything else, indicating that the incident was not good.

Chair Hill thanked Mr. Turner for his time and apologized as she had missed his name. Mr. Turner informed Chair Hill of his name, and she thanked him. She opened questions, comments, and discussions for the BCC and the TMFPD Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC).

Commissioner Clark thanked Chair Hill and noted that, from a citizen's point of view, when a citizen called for assistance, they did not know or care about the imaginary lines on a made-up map somewhere. He asserted they wanted help from anywhere, without care for what jurisdiction that assistance came from. He stated that there were students, visitors, taxpayers, citizens, and residents in the area who did not care about any jurisdictional boundaries, and he reiterated that those boundaries did not matter to them. He claimed that if time were considered as if it were money, then time should also be considered as if it were life. He noted that if somebody was in need of help, that was a necessity, and that individual would want that assistance from whoever was closest or could get to them sooner when the minutes seemed like hours. He stressed that as an area of his concern and noted that automatic aid was exactly what he wanted to support. He

opined that the implementation of automatic aid should have been completed already and referred to Interim Fire Chief Way's earlier mention of having those systems in Clark County. Commissioner Clark noted that Clark County had a comparatively larger population than Washoe County, likely a larger land area to cover, and had been doing automatic aid for over 40 years. He asserted that the local governing bodies in Washoe County were late in becoming involved in those efforts.

Commissioner Clark opined that regional dispatch and automatic aid were the first things the governing bodies should be concentrating on. He noted his belief that any citizen would agree on those two topics with complete support. He mentioned Mr. Turner's earlier comment on what he had personal knowledge of as an example of that and reported that those whom Commissioner Clark had spoken to independently had expressed that they wanted help when they called for it. He expressed that achieving that desire for citizens should be the top priority of the governing bodies, regardless of how they would need to do that. He opined that regionalization should be secondary to that effort until the governing bodies could ensure that everybody who needed help could get assistance as soon as possible, without regard to whose jurisdiction was responsible. He described that as what the public was looking for and noted that what he was looking to resolve was how they could get to the point of achieving that.

Commissioner Clark stated that he had a couple of questions for interim Fire Chief Way and asked him to return to the podium. He recounted that interim Fire Chief Way had sent him a report, though Commissioner Clark noted he did not want to only trust his memory and believed that interim Fire Chief Way would have the related information memorized. He asked interim Fire Chief Way to share with the governing bodies details from the report regarding a study conducted in Reno that outlined what should have been done by the City of Reno in 2019. He expressed that he had not asked the question in an attempt to insinuate potential wrongdoing of those present or to call attention to any members of the governing bodies, as he believed that none of them were likely in office at that time. He noted that the study was conducted a long time ago, and things had since changed. He opined that the governing bodies would need to address things as they were in the present. He reiterated his request to provide the members of the governing bodies with an update on the suggestions from the 2019 report from interim Fire Chief Way.

Interim Fire Chief Way stated that he believed the report Commissioner Clark had referred to was a study conducted in 2019 by the City of Reno, which included a recommendation to restore automatic aid with Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue (TMFR).

Commissioner Clark thanked interim Fire Chief Way for putting that on the record and asked why six or seven years had passed without anything being done. He suggested looking into that as a region, to take that recommendation to heart, and to take action on that. He thanked interim Fire Chief Way for bringing that report to the attention of the BOFC.

Commissioner Andriola stated that the day was great as she could see the whole community represented in the presence of the members of the governing bodies,



though it was a little overwhelming. She extended her gratitude to Mayor Schieve for leading the effort to take the opportunity to have those discussions, as well as to Mayor Lawson and all those involved in the discussion or in previous discussions that she noted had seemed to continue. She stated that it was clear that the governing bodies had heard themes that came from all three fire chiefs during the earlier presentation in terms of cooperation. She opined that a commitment to public safety went without saying. She stated that the reality was that they were moving towards a new dispatch system that was expected to be launched in September of 2025 or October of 2025, and noted that she had been told a date at one point in the past, which she would not share in case that changed. She stated that the point was that the new system was coming and would solve some of the issues and concerns that had been mentioned to a certain extent.

Commissioner Andriola opined that the subject of discussion was large and very important, as it concerned the safety of life, structures, and the preservation of the community with the resources necessary to protect all citizens regardless of jurisdiction. She suggested that despite the enormity and importance of the issue, there was still more work to be done, and there were additional policies that all governing bodies could put into place. She opined that Mayor Schieve would not be leading the effort to assemble the governing bodies to meet if there did not seem to be a sense of awareness brought about by events such as the Davis Fire, the L.A. wildfires, and the increasing presence of wildfires in their vernacular. She noted that the fact that the members of the governing bodies were in attendance at that meeting and were committed to the efforts suggested that they should investigate implementing policies that could be completed immediately across all jurisdictions, specifically regarding unrestricted automatic aid, which she described as having no cost impact and a huge Return on Investment (ROI). She expressed a desire to see that as a priority in the next steps of the process, as the governing bodies moved forward in the discussions she expected would continue. She voiced a belief that those provisions were available to all present jurisdictions and called all jurisdictions to enact them as soon as possible.

Commissioner Andriola noted her intent to discuss a previous suggestion to listen to the experts, though she could not remember who had initially mentioned the topic. She asserted that while she had been deployed to disasters, had seen how that process worked, and understood the incident command system, she was not a public safety professional. She opined that the governing bodies would need to have experts on the issue also working collaboratively with one another, with support from a third-party independent study to extrapolate the great work from all three jurisdictions, but more importantly, to identify what could be done, how they could improve, what those benefits would be, and what the associated costs might be. She stated that those efforts would take time. She reiterated her initial recommendation for the consideration of all three jurisdictions to include a policy on their upcoming agendas that they could all agree upon regarding the topic of discussion, unrestricted automatic aid. She noted that it was likely too late to include that on the agenda for the BCC meeting to be held the following Tuesday, February 11, 2025. She described the point of that recommendation as ensuring that when people picked up the phone during an incident, they would not need to worry, nor should they have to worry, about who was closest or what was happening internally, as they only

wanted a response. She asserted that the members of the governing bodies had the ability to save lives, and they had an obligation to fulfill that ability. She asked the governing bodies to strongly consider doing what they could at that moment and as they moved forward throughout the process.

Commissioner Garcia recounted that they had thanked staff and elected officials for attending the meeting, but they had not acknowledged those who had lost their homes or had been otherwise impacted by fire. She thanked those who had shared their story at the meeting or had a personal connection to the topic, which is why she believed they were all in attendance. She noted that whether someone had faced it or felt it themselves, they were all at the meeting for that common interest and goal in preventing that from impacting other lives. She stated that she wanted to personally thank the firefighters and personnel who were physically engaged in field activities and put their lives at risk every day, whether they were attending the meeting or listening online, for their commitment and service to the County.

Commissioner Garcia noted that as commissioners for both the BCC and the BOFC, they had the privilege to interact with Kelly Echeverria, Washoe County Emergency Management (WCEM) Administrator, and interim Fire Chief Way often, and regularly heard and discussed those conversations with them. She opined that those discussions were the reason for her belief that the communication taking place that day at the meeting was so critical, as it drew connections between all of the jurisdictions. She thanked everybody for finding time within their busy schedules to attend the meeting. She stated that she viewed things through a very regional lens due to the geographical distribution of her district, District 3. She believed she was the only elected official present at the meeting whose district included parts of unincorporated Washoe County, Sparks, and Reno. She said that she took a lot of pride in having the ability to work with council members from the Cities of Reno and Sparks on their common goals. She opined that regardless of where their jurisdictional boundaries were, the members of the governing bodies always had to put that regional perspective at the forefront. She stated that when they talked to their constituents, public safety was always going to be the primary concern, and what their constituents cared about was faster response times. She reported that two individuals who previously provided public comment at that meeting, Mr. Turner and Mr. Mark Neumann, were constituents of her district. She emphasized that nothing else mattered more to their constituents. She described that the second thing her constituents talked to her about was elected officials being good stewards of the funds contributed by taxpayers.

Commissioner Garcia reiterated that public safety and being good stewards were the two most important things to nearly everybody they talked to. She expressed that she did not want to echo what was already said by her colleagues and suspected that many of them were thinking and hearing many of the same things. She voiced full support for the shared CAD with unrestricted automatic aid, eliminating those jurisdictional boundaries, and allocating those resources where they were needed. She identified Sun Valley as a good example of a fire station needing resources, as that station was the busiest station within the TMFPD. She noted that Spanish Springs also hosted an incredibly busy

fire station, though ways were found to staff that site with the appropriate number of personnel and an ambulance to meet critical needs. She implored the members of the governing bodies to think about allocating those resources where they were most needed. She supported Commissioner Andriola's recommendation to conduct a third-party study and opined that the study would help address the redundancies they often faced.

Commissioner Garcia noted she had two questions, the first of which was related to the Joint Advisory Committee. She asked if one of the fire chiefs could address the question. She reported that she had heard the mention of both a Joint Fire Advisory Board and a Joint Fire Advisory Committee on EMS during the meeting. She asked if a fire chief could discuss with the governing bodies which advisory group was in place at that time.

Fire Chief White responded that there was a Joint Advisory Committee for EMS at that time, with each agency having voting representation and a voice at the committee meetings. He noted that Dr. Chad Kingsley, District Health Officer of Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH), served as the County oversight on that committee.

Commissioner Garcia acknowledged Fire Chief White's response and noted that her second question was related to dispatch. She noted that they were moving to a new dispatch system but asked what they, as experts, thought would be most beneficial in terms of location, a physical building, and whether they expected that to be needed.

Fire Chief White stated that his opinion, based on his personal and professional experience locally and elsewhere, was that having a regional dispatch center that served fire services would be a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). He noted that such a center was present in the Sacramento area. He described that a licensed PSAP was required to receive requests for help directly from the public. He noted that they utilized a system at that time with three PSAP centers, one for the County, the City of Reno, and the City of Sparks. He suggested that under the franchise agreement, roughly 80 percent of the fire calls were transferred to a non-PSAP center. He stated that REMSA's dispatch center was where they received Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) determinations for the appropriate resource response needed for an emergency call. He elaborated that while SFD fire engines were dispatched from their PSAP, ambulances through their P3 were dispatched through REMSA.

Commissioner Garcia indicated that she did not want to speak on behalf of everyone but stated that many of those at the meeting were there because they knew that public safety was the most important thing to the community. She expressed that there would be no stability in the community without public safety. She implored the members of the governing bodies that if they decided to move forward with the third-party study, to contribute every idea and consider each of them, including the possibility of a new facility if that were determined to be mutually beneficial to all parties involved. She thanked the fire chiefs for their presentation and their time.

Fire Chief White mentioned that there had been previous consulting studies conducted that provided several recommendations, many of which were ultimately not implemented or did not receive the consideration they should have. He suggested that there was a possibility of revisiting some of those studies.

Commissioner Garcia expressed gratitude toward the SFD and the TMFPD, as she experienced the unified command during the Sullivan Fire and wanted to commend them on their work on that effort. Chair Hill thanked Commissioner Garcia and moved the discussion to the City of Reno.

Mayor Schieve thanked Chair Hill and inquired if Reno City Councilmember Meghan Ebert wanted to comment, to which she indicated she did not. She then asked Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr, who noted that she wanted to speak.

Councilmember Duerr referred to the earlier mention by Commissioner Clark of the study conducted by the City of Reno in 2019 and stated that she had been on the elected Reno City Council since 2014. She recounted that she heard reverberations from the divorce of the fire agencies for years, which persisted through the first three years of her tenure. She acknowledged that there were studies conducted. She agreed that studies were necessary and that the City of Reno had not taken a close enough look at the provided recommendations or subsequently implemented them. She stated that Fire Chief Cochran knew of her continued frustrations that the CAD regionalization was not expected to be done until September of 2025, despite that effort being directed long ago. She opined that implementing what the Reno City Council asked to be done seemed to take a very long time. She expressed that she did not know how to fix that problem. She asserted that they had come up with great ideas, given policy-level direction likely at every jurisdiction, but that ultimately did not seem to have completely taken hold. She reiterated that the delay in implementation was what she wanted to address.

Councilmember Duerr noted that she had possibly heard interim Fire Chief Way mention unrestricted automatic aid. She stated that she was uncertain what that term meant or how that differed from standard automatic aid. She asked if interim Fire Chief Way could explain unrestricted automatic aid in more detail.

Interim Fire Chief Way described that the automatic aid agreement between TMFPD and the City of Reno at that time covered very specific areas and regions. He noted that unrestricted automatic aid would cover areas across all boundaries.

Councilmember Duerr indicated her belief that members of the Reno City Council were under the impression that what interim Fire Chief Way described as unrestricted automatic aid was already happening with the automatic aid agreement in place at the time. She suspected that what they thought would happen when asking for automatic aid was that the system would be wide-ranging and apply to all activities. She expressed that she was completely supportive of whatever they could do and had been doing for the previous ten years to fix those issues. She opined that those issues seemed to

be fixed very incrementally and stated that she would appreciate a broader answer and for the direction given by the governing bodies to be implemented quickly. She reiterated her intent to support the bill mentioned previously by Nevada Senator Skip Daly, though she noted that she did not know what that looked like. She voiced her desire to support what had been said by her colleagues. She wanted the governing bodies to move forward expeditiously and reiterated her commitment to the public safety initiative.

Councilmember Ebert agreed with the suggestion that automatic aid be unrestricted. She recounted an example within her ward of medical emergencies occurring at a golf course in the community. She elaborated that despite a fire station being in sight of the incident and those present expecting personnel from that station to come and address the emergency, a fire truck ultimately arrived from elsewhere. She reported that people had ultimately passed away from that incident. She acknowledged that she did not know if those people would have been saved had emergency services arrived sooner but described that it was very difficult for the families of those who lost their lives to have seen a fire station across the street, only for the personnel from that station not to come to assist them. She acknowledged that there had since been an agreement for that location so similar events would not occur again, but she reiterated that the story spoke to the need for unrestricted automatic aid and for those who were available to help to be able to go where they were needed. Councilmember Ebert asked if the 2019 study, which had been commented on previously, had outlined any of the topics mentioned to identify potential redundancies and what specifically was covered within the study.

Fire Chief Cochran noted that the study she had referred to was conducted in 2019 by an outside agency called the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). He asserted that the RFD was not afraid to examine its service all the time. He reported that the study made 32 proposals and noted that several of those recommendations were for what they already did. He provided the study's example of recommending the implementation of an apparatus replacement program, despite RFD already doing that. He stated that RFD had been looking into the automatic aid recommendation but noted that part of the challenge in that effort resulted from the three different PSAPs being in different locations, as mentioned previously by Fire Chief White. He reported that TMFPD utilized a different system altogether in a different location, which was a factor as to why the automatic aid system was so unrefined. He opined that those were the factors that the RFD wanted to investigate. He stated that if he were to recommend a path forward, he would direct city managers to get together with the fire chiefs to examine how they could achieve the direction that would be given at that day's meeting, while accounting for costs, efficiencies, redundancies, and all of the details which he suspected the governing bodies did not necessarily want to identify at that time, but could be addressed at the manager and fire chief level.

Councilmember Ebert noted that she was not in her position at the time of the divorce between the fire services and asked the reason for that separation. She opined that there must have been a reason why the combined fire agencies went apart when that decision was made. She acknowledged that they were considering doing things differently and asked why the decision to separate the fire agencies was initially made.

Fire Chief Cochran recounted that he was actively engaged in field activities during the period with a consolidated fire agency and was not yet a battalion chief when the agencies separated. He opined that, from an operational approach, the regional approach from the consolidated fire agency was spectacular and worked very well. He noted that he had heard different reasons why the fire agencies separated. He stated that speculating would be irresponsible, as he had not been present in the room where the decision was made and did not know what those conversations were. He acknowledged that a path forward had been proposed but was not accepted by the related parties, which included the City of Reno and the County, as the City of Sparks had not been involved. He recounted that the consolidation could not be saved in the end.

Councilmember Ebert asked if any other attendees knew the reason for the disconnect that caused the separation. She acknowledged that Fire Chief Cochran was uncomfortable speaking on that topic. She asked again if there was anybody who could educate the members of the governing bodies on what occurred.

Mayor Schieve noted that there would probably be some past elected officials in the room that day who could answer that question very well. She suggested that she provide context regarding the previously mentioned 2019 study. She clarified to Fire Chief Cochran that the direction was to do whatever he possibly could to make Reno the safest, which she noted has always been her motto and something that was the highest priority on her list. She reported that there had been many private meetings where she was told absolutely not. She recounted that the political landscape looked very different in 2019. She commended the elected officials at the meeting on behalf of herself and the community for attending the meeting that day. She expressed that it was very difficult and a constant effort to get all of the members of the governing bodies in the same room on the same day, but she asserted that she knew that it was the time to act and that change was needed immediately. She opined that, unfortunately, it had taken the occurrence of the Davis Fire for people to recognize that things had changed in the region, and she described that as unacceptable.

Mayor Schieve addressed Fire Chief Cochran and noted that as the fire chief of the City of Reno, she wanted him to make the Cities of Reno and Sparks, the County, and the region the safest they could possibly be. She recounted that she regularly received pushback, so that goal would need to be achieved through the collaboration between all three fire chiefs, with them working together as they were the experts and the ones that the members of the governing bodies relied on. She opined that ultimately, their lives were reliant on the actions of the fire chiefs. Mayor Schieve thanked every firefighter and the men and women of the fire departments who were in the room. She recommended they stand up to be recognized for their miraculous work, having saved many lives during the last fire event. She acknowledged that the wind could have changed at any moment and taken everyone out. She asserted that there had been far too much political fighting, even amongst the fire chiefs, which she felt very strongly about.

Mayor Schieve reiterated that the direction from the City of Reno had always been to achieve the highest safety regardless of whatever that took or whatever the cost was. She noted that she could not and would never put a price on an individual's life, and asserted that one of the previous public commenters, Ms. Hannah Hoobyar, personally knew that to be the case. She emphasized that she and all of her colleagues would always do what they could. She referred to Commissioner Clark's earlier statement that fire did not know any boundaries and opined that it was only there to destroy. She acknowledged that Commissioner Clark and his beloved pets were close to the fire. She reiterated that she intended to give additional context. She noted that they had received a considerable amount of pushback, causing difficulties even in getting into a room together, which led her to again express her gratitude to the members of the governing bodies for being in attendance at the meeting.

Reno City Councilmember Kathleen Taylor echoed her appreciation for her colleagues and the leadership present at the meeting that day. She reported reading the 2014 Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) Report on Regional Fire Service, which aligned with Mayor Schieve's earlier point by stating that the biggest obstacles to their challenge were turf, power, and politics. She opined that the meeting indicated that those barriers had been eliminated, and they could move on to the next steps in the process. She referred to the advice given previously by Senator Daly to focus on the goal and listen to the experts. She noted that what she heard from their experts at the meeting was to implement complete mutual aid, that regionalization was the responsible and right thing to do, and that the fire chiefs attested that they were always looking to identify what they could do better. She suggested they could proceed by working together to gather additional information for enhanced regional fire options, furthering the goal of unrestricted mutual aid and regionalization. She attested that they had eliminated the political barriers for those efforts by the governing bodies being in attendance that day.

Reno City Councilmember Miguel Martinez expressed appreciation to his colleagues for attending the meeting. He noted that he did not want to be redundant in the comments that were already made. He suspected that Reno City Councilmember Brandi Anderson and the members of the Sparks City Council would also have some great things to say. He stated that he looked forward to working together as a region to do exactly what Senator Daly had implored the members of the governing bodies to do previously, such as improved response times, preparedness for the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) sections of their cities to protect the region, and faster response times.

Councilmember Martinez recalled that there was one point from the presentation by the fire chiefs that he felt was especially poignant. He referred to the slide from the presentation with the title *Regional Successes – Present* and noted that the slide indicated that the governing bodies were at a phase of co-operation. He elaborated by referring to the slide titled *Future Regional Opportunities* by describing that the pyramid chart indicated that efficiencies continued to increase as one moved up in the pyramid, though he acknowledged that achieving the higher steps of regional fire, shared dispatch, or partial sharing could be more difficult. He opined that the harder the governing bodies

worked at that meeting to make progress, the better those services could be for the community.

Reno City Councilmember Brandi Anderson noted her intent to speak from a slightly different perspective. She recounted that Fire Chief White's colleague, Division Chief Means, introduced her to her husband, which she opined made her a part of what she described as the regional fire family approximately 24 years prior. She expressed pride in being a member of that family and noted that she was a part of that family that experienced the divorce of the fire agencies. She opined that the community needed to understand that the elected officials involved in the divorce were the ones who separated from one another, not the fire departments. She attested that the fire family cared for one another regardless, and did not notice the difference in uniforms, departments, or who made the decisions for their departments. She elaborated that they only considered an individual's equipment, talent, and expertise while acknowledging whether that individual was present and ready to be put into action. She expressed being greatly encouraged by the efforts shown at that meeting for all members of the governing bodies to be in attendance, as well as by the ability of those present to communicate with the care and concern that the community and firefighters deserved.

Councilmember Brandi Anderson stated that she was confident that, with the talent, equipment, seniority, and stations in the region at that time, they were in a unique position to recast resources in a way that would ensure the correct personnel with the right apparatus could respond to every call as quickly and effectively as possible. She attested that wildfire and emergency response did not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. She noted that their firefighters likewise did not stop at those boundaries, and that the ability to respond with the best resources available should not be impacted by such boundaries either. She opined that one of the most pressing challenges they faced was the wave of retirements across all of their departments, which threatened the loss of institutional knowledge and experience, a widened seniority gap, and left them more vulnerable when experience was needed most. She suggested that by coming together as a region with all three departments, those gaps in seniority could be filled, leadership could be strengthened, and balanced expertise across the entire department could be ensured so no single area was left without seasoned guidance when that most mattered.

Councilmember Brandi Anderson reiterated that she felt encouraged by the willingness, cooperation, and energy she saw at the meeting. She opined that the effort to collaborate and find solutions that moved their fire services forward was precisely the kind of leadership the community expected and deserved. She stated that those efforts were not only about improving emergency response, but also ensuring that firefighters were supported, residents were protected, and the region was prepared for every fire season, storm season, and evolving disaster that approached. She thanked those in attendance for the work and preparation they contributed to that meeting and expressed that she looked forward to the solutions they came to as a community.

Councilmember Duerr referred to Fire Chief Cochran's earlier recommendation to bring the fire chiefs together to work with senior management at the



Cities of Reno and Sparks and the County. She noted that while there was discussion on dispatch, she had not heard mention of the new potential dispatch center, which was expected to be hosted within the new Public Safety Center. She described that the Public Safety Center was centrally located, encompassed a vast area, and was designed for regional cooperation and dispatch, if not for fully unified dispatch. She hoped that when individuals looked at those things, they would consider the Public Safety Center a brand-new resource that was fully wired and ready to go. She also hoped for consideration of how that resource could be utilized for the benefit of all.

Fire Chief Cochran asserted that dispatch was the vital element and was what they needed to make automatic aid happen. He opined that to do so, they required everybody to be consolidated. He addressed Commissioner Garcia's earlier suggestion and attested that they all needed to be together on one system, in a single room, and doing a shared job in order to be as efficient as possible. He added to the earlier comments from Mayor Schieve and Councilmember Taylor regarding the politics and what had happened before. He noted that if he were to attribute a reason as to why the fire agencies separated, he would probably agree with the reasons they had suggested. He stated that both Mayor Schieve and Councilmember Taylor had pointed out that things differed from how they were during that separation. He expressed his appreciation for those who attended the meeting to make a difference in what they could do as a fire service in the region.

Sparks City Councilmember Joe Rodriguez stated that he had been waiting for that moment for a while. He addressed the fire chiefs and noted that support was heard for a study to be conducted from some of his colleagues during the meeting. He stated that his understanding was that studies had already been performed. He suggested that there were likely studies conducted throughout the United States (US) in areas similar to the local environment, such as Colorado or Utah. He noted that the region was not entirely unique and asked whether the three fire chiefs believed another study was necessary. He opined that enough talent and experience were available from the three fire chiefs, the city managers, and the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) to implement those efforts relatively sooner than a study could.

Fire Chief Cochran expressed his appreciation for the question and noted that he disagreed with Councilmember Rodriguez at some level. He acknowledged that while they were the subject matter experts and knew the region, how that region worked, and how they could be most efficient, an independent third party presented the benefit to break down any jurisdictional barriers, any potential issues of who was in charge, or any prioritization of what was best for one particular jurisdiction over the others. He noted that input from an independent third party would provide suggestions from the perspective of a neutral subject matter expert.

Fire Chief White opined that there should ultimately be an unbiased outside consultant with no independent proprietorship of one jurisdiction compared to the others. He noted that things had changed since the occurrence of the other studies. He recommended that an efficiency and feasibility study be conducted by a good consultant, which would likely be necessary. He clarified that there was a bigger question to answer

first regarding whether they could move forward legislatively before the governing bodies investigated making a Request for Proposal (RFP) or jointly funding such a study. He reiterated that legislative questions would need to be answered before investing in any studies. He added to Chief Cochran's response to Councilmember Rodriguez. He opined that while many subject matter experts were available internally who understood and agreed on some of the issues, an independent third-party study was the most financially and politically effective way to move forward.

Fire Chief Cochran suggested that certain things could be done at that moment to progress efforts without the study, with the fire chiefs and city managers serving as subject matter experts, as recommended earlier by members of the governing bodies. He noted that the study could potentially move those efforts toward the fire service's self-actualization once the governing bodies agreed on needing that next level.

Councilmember Rodriguez indicated his appreciation for their responses. He recounted that he and likely many others from the region witnessed the level of cooperation among the fire services fluctuate over the past two decades. He acknowledged that interim Fire Chief Way had mentioned fairly recent success stories, but opined that while those stories were great, for each of those recent stories, there were decades of stories with no loss of life or property because of the type of political climate inherited by the majority of the elected officials present.

Councilmember Rodriguez expressed support for the efforts to go forward. He acknowledged that many of those in attendance thought automatic and mutual aid sounded great but opined that they were great temporary solutions and were not sustainable long-term over the years, as the local political climate could change instantaneously. He attested that he supported something that obligated them to make and move forward with one fire agency, which ensured similar events would not repeat for their children and grandchildren. He stated that he did not want another echo of the Sierra Fire Protection District and Nevada Department of Forestry (NDF) stories, which he described as having been horrible. He voiced his appreciation for Councilmember Brandi Anderson's earlier statements. He reiterated his support for one agency, policy, and administration with a single way of doing things. He emphasized that funding needed to be investigated and budgets had to be considered. He opined that what was being done at that time was not sustainable and hoped something could be worked out collectively amongst themselves so the State of Nevada would not have to tell the attending governing bodies how they needed to undergo those efforts. He speculated that he foresaw that kind of State involvement coming.

Sparks City Councilmember Charlene Bybee suspected she likely echoed many of the feelings people had expressed that day. She opined that unrestricted automatic aid should happen, which was previously said to have no cost and would presently make a huge difference. She recounted that despite serving in that position for ten years, she did not know precisely how long the discussions regarding regional CAD had been ongoing. She stated that, unfortunately, with the government, things often did not move as fast as they would like them to and opined that they were better with issues on the local level than

on the State or federal levels. She stated that it was frustrating when something like that had taken so long, but the good news was that the regional CAD was coming.

Councilmember Bybee supported the reasoning to look into consolidation brought forward by the fire chiefs, such as resource sharing, unified command, administrative efficiency, and redundancy elimination. She opined that she especially supported those presented reasons from a fiscal perspective. She expressed that her two top priorities were public safety, as that was their first job as elected officials, and their fiscal responsibility to their taxpayers, community, and businesses. She elaborated that her prioritization of their fiscal responsibility made funding those consolidation efforts a significant question. She noted further questions regarding how they would fund, manage, and determine a unified command were all inquiries they would need to work out another time, not on that day. She noted there were additional concerns, such as who the policy would go to when it was presented, and whether that would go to all three governing bodies to be mutually agreed upon. Councilmember Bybee believed working through those concerns would be possible, and noted she was not suggesting it would not be, only that what that looked like could be very different from what they were used to, which was not necessarily bad. She noted that those concerns could and should be viewed as something very positive, with those steps along the way being considered as what they would need to figure out, as well as whether they could replicate actions taken by other communities.

Councilmember Bybee reported having found that an individual did not have to waste time creating something that existed previously, as they could replicate what other communities had done. She suggested the governing bodies investigate communities nationwide similar to theirs in size and organization of jurisdictions to identify how those communities succeeded at the same efforts, recognize what had or had not worked, and assist the governing bodies by using those methods as a template. She stated that her only hesitation in recommending a study was that those took time and contributed toward the frustration she had previously mentioned. She acknowledged that studies were beneficial, but that time was a factor as well as whether a study could be conducted efficiently by investigating the old study or first getting to the point where the study was necessary. She reiterated that she wanted things to move forward immediately.

Sparks City Councilmember Paul Anderson expressed his appreciation for those in the emergency services side of the business for what they made happen daily for the community. He noted that he was thrilled that those present at the dais that day had echoed each other in the desire to provide the best emergency response and outcomes for the community. He supported the direction they were going. He opined that politics could derail great ideas faster than anything else and hoped that they would continue as they were then. He stated that, similar to Councilmember Duerr, he could not recall ever hearing the term unrestricted automatic aid agreements. He asked for clarification on the difference between an automatic aid agreement and an unrestricted automatic aid agreement.

Interim Fire Chief Way clarified that unrestricted automatic aid meant anywhere, while the automatic aid agreement TMFPD had with the City of Reno at that time was for very specific areas, which TMFPD had to implement into their dispatching.

He referred to Fire Chief Cochran's earlier mention of dispatch being the most vital element, and interim Fire Chief Way agreed that regional dispatch was one of the keys. He reported that there was one PSAP in all of Southern Nevada, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. He reminded those in attendance that what they were trying to do was not impossible, and noted there were four agencies and over 80 fire stations in Southern Nevada who had been operating in that way for over 40 years. He reiterated that the operations in Southern Nevada demonstrated that those efforts were possible and the system worked seamlessly. He recounted that when he was a resident of Las Vegas, the closest fire station to his home was North Las Vegas, which had remained the closest station to that house, and would be for many years until the Las Vegas Fire Department built another fire station in that area. He provided that as an example of unrestricted automatic aid, where there was never a time when someone said they would not be responding to a call, as they would always send the closest unit immediately.

Councilmember Paul Anderson thanked Interim Fire Chief Way and noted that he had another inquiry related to further clarification. He stated that during the meeting, the governing bodies heard about CAD, Hexagon, and the term shared dispatch. He requested clarification regarding the differences between them, as well as whether those terms were interchangeable.

Fire Chief Cochran elaborated that the CAD was the physical system, which is where data was inputted, what dispatchers would look at, and what was displayed on screens. He noted that there could be a shared system without a shared dispatch, and all of the fire agencies could operate off of that shared system. He stated that everyone that Councilmember Paul Anderson had heard from that day, including Mr. Duplantis from REMSA, would be on that system. He noted that if there were separate dispatch centers for REMSA, the Cities of Reno and Sparks, and possibly the County, there would not be a shared dispatch, as that would instead be separate dispatches working off of a shared system. He referred to the CAD as a tool to bring the agencies together and opined that the CAD would allow for sharing information more efficiently and accurately, but not at the best level possible. He described the best possible level as shared dispatch, where one dispatcher could access any resource, not just be able to see what those resources were, which he noted would require an agreement between jurisdictions. He provided the example of shared dispatch between jurisdictions where dispatchers could identify that they needed four specific resources, as those resources were the closest and could take what was required regardless of jurisdiction. He referred to Commissioner Clark's earlier statements. He added that nobody was concerned with what words were on the side of the fire engine or ambulance that arrived to help, as they only cared that those services got to them and provided what they needed when required.

Councilmember Paul Anderson noted that he understood the agencies were not all operating on the same radio stations or systems. He asked whether making that into a shared dispatch would integrate the agencies, allow them to utilize the same system, and communicate with one another.

Fire Chief Cochran responded that Councilmember Paul Anderson described the goal of the shared dispatch, with one CAD system serving as the dispatch system and one communication system being the radio system.

Sparks City Councilmember Dian VanderWell thanked the community first responders and the public for having shown up that day, and expressed gratitude for the leadership of Mayor Schieve, Mayor Lawson, Chair Hill, and the rest of her colleagues. She stated that she felt enlightened by seeing her colleagues at the meeting. She noted that she echoed a lot of what her colleagues had said but wanted to share that she mostly agreed with Councilmember Brandi Anderson's outlook on what the fire departments looked like. She recounted having spent the summer in a shift at each one of the six fire stations in Sparks. She reported that the City of Sparks had a lot of one- or two-year firefighters, which created a gap between being able to move their firefighters up and thus having a well-trained fire department. She opined that regionalization was a way for the SFD to fill those areas until the department matured. She reiterated that she echoed what everyone had said previously and voiced agreement with Councilmember Duerr. She emphasized that getting regional dispatch had taken years and that the wait was painful. She opined that the government was very good at conducting studies, shelving them, and ultimately never doing what was recommended by the study. She hoped that things would move more quickly.

Sparks City Councilmember Donald Abbott remarked that he was the last of the 16 members of the governing bodies to speak and thus would try not to take up too much time. He thanked everyone for their attendance and acknowledged that there had been many expressions of thankfulness that day. He noted that he wanted to thank the media in the back of the room for informing the public on what the governing bodies discussed at the meeting. He acknowledged that the room was full of people but opined that what they discussed at the meeting would impact the entire community, not just those present that day. He expressed excitement that all the members of the governing bodies attended the meeting and noted that they all served on many boards and committees. He acknowledged that while they did not always agree on topics, all those present were interested in progressing to varying degrees and looked forward to that together, which he reiterated was exciting.

Councilmember Abbott reported that he wrote out many things that he would not read aloud but wanted to mention specific points regarding regionalization. He noted that improving response times had been cited by a fire chief and Commissioner Clark and agreed that people did not care what badge was worn or what color the fire engine was when assistance arrived, as they just wanted help as soon as possible. He opined that there was a great opportunity to save tax dollars in resources and cost efficiency. He suggested that there was a benefit as well in legislative and policy support, where the governing bodies could come together as a team when talking to the State as one unit. He described starting with mutual aid agreements as a great initial action. He referred to Councilmember Rodriguez's previous mention that such efforts were a first step, not something that would apply forever. He reiterated his belief that they were experiencing an exciting time.

Mayor Lawson suggested that the first action the governing bodies would need to take was to vote on whether they would pursue that. He stated that he would start by directing Sparks City Manager Dion Louthan to meet with the fire chiefs. He attested that there were easily achievable goals that could be reached that same day, as they had discovered during the meeting. He noted that they could revisit that topic but suggested that they consider that there were 116 days remaining in the Legislature, as 4 of those days had already been used. He suggested they complete the efforts quickly and provide Senator Daly with direction as to what worked, in hopes that they could speak collectively, as mentioned by Councilmember Abbott, to have Governor Joe Lombardo hear them. Mayor Lawson noted that the goal was directly against Governor Lombardo's edicts regarding no new taxes. Mayor Lawson asserted that the goal was something they thought was good for the region and would improve outcomes. He asked if they would need 15 battalion chiefs and suggested that there would likely be some efficiencies to address with that. He opined with certainty that they would not need three fire chiefs, apologized to the three fire chiefs present, and noted that some efficiencies came with regionalization.

Mayor Lawson wanted to see Senator Daly pursue those efforts and noted that he could call the working group whatever he desired. He suggested that Senator Daly include at least one of their council members in the working group to cover the political part of that effort and prevent a political issue from evolving. He opined that those political issues had been the point of failure in the past. He recounted that, based on his memory of history, the separation between fire agencies occurred due to the involved entities disagreeing about how another entity balanced the money. He opined that there were efficiencies related to that. He asked if the City of Sparks could formulate a motion in the interest of time.

Chair Hill asked if they could continue the discussion prior to forwarding a motion, as she believed there might be additional comments and questions. She asked if those questions could first be addressed before continuing with a motion. She inquired whether he instead wanted to move forward with a motion specifically for the City of Sparks. Mayor Lawson noted that he was just thinking about moving forward. Chair Hill acknowledged that. She addressed his concerns for time and appreciated his desire to move forward. She opined that the members of the governing bodies wanted to move forward, as they had been at the meeting for quite some time.

Chair Hill noted her appreciation for Mayor Lawson pointing out that the last occurrence where they experienced difficulties was caused by money. She opined that another issue came from fair representation and ensuring that all governing bodies involved had a voice. She suggested there would need to be some accountability if they were to move forward. She expressed interest in seeing how interim Chief Way and the managers would assist with accountability, what that would look like, how they would report to their boards or a smaller board, and how they could ensure there was understanding that those efforts were moving forward. She acknowledged that there were only so many days remaining in the Legislature to complete the work. She appreciated the idea and recommendation of having a council member serve on another regional body but expressed uncertainty about whether an additional body would be too much political theater.

Chair Hill opined that they needed to consider representation as they progressed by ensuring everyone involved felt comfortable and represented. She noted that what she had heard suggested that the undefined nature of those efforts had been challenging for the BCC, though she did not want to speak on behalf of the Board collectively. She explained that the BCC had not seen a Bill Draft Request (BDR), and there was an understanding that any related tax increases would fall on the BCC. She stated they needed to understand the consequences and opined that the BCC was very proud of the TMFPD for what the agency provided, the service, and the staff. She questioned whether her previous statement might have called attention to an apparent, yet undiscussed, difficulty. She noted her appreciation for Mayor Schieve always doing the same. She reiterated her belief that what she had expressed aligned with where the BCC stood on the issue.

Chair Hill referred to Commissioner Garcia's earlier comments and noted that if they were considering additional taxes, they would need to ensure the acknowledgment of the structural deficits in the budget, whether that be considered concerning the fire service, providing park and planning services, or business licensing. She asserted that there were difficulties keeping up with the demand for growth due to the depreciation of and cap on property taxes, which she noted was a significant issue. She opined that Governor Lombardo should hear them clearly about the issue they faced in providing all of the services in the region.

Commissioner Garcia noted that her previous mention of a third party was in relation to consolidation, not regionalization, which she clarified were two different things. She voiced her full support for taking action that day for regional efforts such as regionalization, interlocal agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), or whatever that looked like. She elaborated that consolidation was a different topic. She noted that further clarification on what was being discussed at that time would be helpful for her.

Chair Hill inquired if Commissioners Garcia or Andriola had additional comments, which they subsequently indicated they did not. She noted that she would move on to Commissioner Clark, followed by Councilmember Ebert and others from the Reno City Council, and finally the Sparks City Council.

Commissioner Clark emphasized that things had changed since the occurrences in the past, and that they had an opportunity to approach things differently in the present. He noted that the situation had changed and that issues needed to be addressed in another way at that time. He expressed pride for Commissioner Garcia and her district, as she exemplified what he spoke about earlier. He noted that Commissioner Garcia's district included the jurisdictions of the County and two different cities, which was a factor that had to be handled by the residents of her district. He opined that if 100 people were asked where the lines of demarcation were for the different jurisdictions, they would not know. He attested that having knowledge of that was not their job, and all they wanted to know was whether they required help, whether they could get help when needed, and how fast they could get that assistance.

Commissioner Clark noted that Commissioner Andriola and Councilmember Bybee had mentioned the cost associated with the efforts, which he opined was an important consideration. He emphasized that the implementation of regionalized dispatch should be moving at a rapid pace. He mentioned unrestricted automatic aid and stated that while he did not intend to call attention to anybody, there was a member of one of the city councils who thought they already had automatic aid. He emphasized that there were elected officials who were unclear on what was taking place, and asked what that meant for the citizens, as they just thought that when they needed help, they would place a call and somebody would come to help them. He noted that those events were not happening, as when they were calling for help, there was a discussion of who was going to take responsibility and act. He attested that the people and some of the elected officials did not know that. He opined that regionalized dispatched and automatic aid needed to happen as fast as possible. He expressed that he did not want to leave citizens at the mercy of what may or may not happen at the State Legislature. He noted that they could fix those things immediately and emphasized that they needed to be rectified as soon as possible. He acknowledged that the Cities of Reno and Sparks and the County were present at the meeting but stated that he would like to see representation from the tribes if they were interested. He opined that the tribes needed to be involved as well, as there were large portions of land in the County that were represented by the tribes.

Councilmember Ebert noted that she shared Commissioner Garcia's concern about what exactly they were talking about that day. She expressed complete support for having one dispatch, which she thought made sense to everybody for many reasons. She also supported unrestricted mutual aid. She referred to the earlier comments related to the 116 days remaining in the legislative session and opined that the time frame did not mean they needed to hastily assemble something to be pushed through, which had not been adequately considered, worked on, and communicated to the community. She noted that such comments made her nervous, as they had already experienced a divorce in the fire services. She wanted whatever they came up with to be successful. She stated that in her experience, things did not usually work out the best when they were rushed. She emphasized that they needed to move forward at their own pace, not strictly within the 116 days mentioned previously. She opined that there were conflicting comments that supported mutual aid as being beneficial and a potential cost-saving measure, while the following statements indicated a need to have another funding mechanism. She asserted that people were already paying for fire services. She noted that she experienced difficulty in accepting the idea that those efforts would be beneficial by reducing other needs and ultimately saving money if there would also be a need for additional fees or taxes for funding. She reiterated that comments about having things rushed through to be completed made her very leery. She supported mutual aid and whatever they needed to do to assist the fire chiefs and first responders in moving to a single dispatch system. She thanked the firefighters for all they did and hoped they would consider her comments as being supportive of them. She wanted to ensure the governing bodies did everything the right way and did not rush through anything in order to prevent another divorce of services later.



Councilmember Duerr noted that she wanted to make a final statement for herself. She acknowledged that there were many comments and questions regarding why the fire services parted ways, and that money played a role. She added that the issue of governance was also involved. She noted that her understanding of the situation indicated that the bodies involved in that separation did not feel they had appropriate representation for how to run the agency, which led to people being disaffected, disappointed, and disinterested in working together any longer. She recounted that she had mentioned to Senator Daly that the only joint powers authority agreement she knew of being done at the Legislature in the past 20 years was for the flood project. She noted that the flood project, like the previous fire consolidation, was a coordinating committee without the authority to be an agency, hire staff, issue bonds, or take the necessary actions. She stated that the bill associated with implementing the coordinating committee was relatively small but had included a 75-page accompanying agreement that detailed how the committee would be governed, how they would come together, how resources would be collected, what had already been and could be spent, and what was the appropriate way to move forward.

Councilmember Duerr noted that several attendees of the meeting were on the Truckee River Flood Project (TRFP) and working under that agreement. She acknowledged that there were many ways to govern an organization, but they had decided to utilize a senatorial model with two representatives from each jurisdiction. She suggested that whether they followed that model for the goals presented during the meeting or something else, the perception was that the decision had to feel fair, and the people had to feel as though they had representation. She noted that without that perception, people would ultimately feel dissatisfied. She wanted to ensure that while the governing bodies discussed funding, they were also putting as much intellectual focus into how they would govern, work together, and maintain appropriate representation so all 19 of those present would not need to be directly involved in those decisions. She attested that there were many regional boards at the time, some of which dealt with substantial funds. She noted that she saw Jenny Brekhus, Director of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), present at the meeting. Councilmember Duerr elaborated that she served as the TMWA Board of Directors Chair and emphasized that substantial funds were involved in TMWA and the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). She theorized that the suggested committee would also have a lot of money, equipment, and people involved. She reported that the Reno City Council knew that to be the case, as police and public safety were the City of Reno's largest expenditure. She acknowledged that there was much money being discussed, but she wanted to encourage everyone to maintain consideration for appropriate representation as they moved forward to address previous flaws and prevent the continuation of that issue.

Councilmember Taylor wanted to voice her belief that they were not yet at the final stage of the process, where they could decide regarding regionalization or determine tax increases. She opined that significant research would be conducted and details would be discussed before that. She expressed concern that two natural disasters within the region were needed to motivate the governing bodies to attend the meeting and emphasized that such events should not have to happen again. She suggested exploring what the regional model looked like while they were all present and had the resources. She

clarified that she was not implying she was ready to make a regional model but acknowledged that they were all in attendance at the meeting to move forward. She asserted that when they were making claims of prioritizing public safety, they had a duty to their residents to investigate what regionalization would look like, get a team together, and bring those findings back for further consideration. She reiterated that she saw no harm in that.

Mayor Schieve asked how Chair Hill would like to proceed. Mayor Schieve noted that there was one thing she wanted to see that day. Mayor Schieve attested that TMWA and NV Energy were two critical partners she planned to have participate in the following discussion, which she noted should have happened at the meeting that day. She wanted to know precisely about water services and resources. She elaborated that the public also wanted to know about those things, and the governing bodies needed to know. She noted that people assumed there would be water when they turned on their water hoses, as she had heard reports that the water systems could be exhausted in one neighborhood. She asserted that she wanted answers to whether they would see severe outages in the region after seeing areas lose power despite being away from active fires. She emphasized that they needed to be better prepared regarding how they were messaging to the public and what that looked like for the responsibility of TMWA, NV Energy, and their other partners.

Mayor Schieve acknowledged that there were additional partners present at the meeting and thanked them on behalf of herself and the members of the governing bodies in attendance, as she knew they needed to hear presentations from those partners whom they could not address that day. She provided Washoe County Regional Animal Services (WCRAS) and the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority (RSCVA) as examples because they provided significant sheltering services during fire incidents. She reiterated that there were many partners at the meeting that they needed to hear from, as the people also required answers from them. She emphasized that the discussion was not over and they needed to continue having those conversations so the public could have transparency regarding each stakeholder's roles. She noted that many people had asked her about water.

Chair Hill agreed and appreciated that the governing bodies were having that discussion. She attested that they had seen that regional approaches worked really well over the past four years in the community after the creation of a homeless center, which made them a national model. She asked Mayor Lawson if there were any additional comments from the City of Sparks. She noted that County staff had prepared a motion and asked for the slide to be displayed on the screen as they concluded the discussion with the final speakers.

Councilmember VanderWell stated she had a clarifying question directed at interim Fire Chief Way. She acknowledged that they had discussed unrestricted mutual aid often throughout the meeting. She noted that he had described coming from the fire service in Las Vegas and asked if the crews in Las Vegas consisted of three or four individuals.

Interim Fire Chief Way answered that the Las Vegas Valley had all four-person crews at that time.

Councilmember Rodriguez acknowledged that costs were a concern for all and needed further investigation, but he asked what the dollar cost of a person's life was. He understood that they had a fiscal responsibility and challenged those present to consider their efforts as an investment in the future. He elaborated that he wanted the members of the governing bodies to think about what they could do that day to set the expectation for decades regarding what the fire service would look like. He reiterated his challenge to look into that and acknowledged that they were taking a significant step forward, though he did not want to lose momentum. He suggested that they investigate everything after seeing what the motion might be, such as what regionalization and consolidation would look like, whether they needed and could then revisit the BDR, or whether they could continue their efforts at a local level, what resources they had in fire engines and manpower, whether certain stations could be closed down, and how they could work together. He opined that they were doing amazing things but wanted to challenge them to investigate every possible option as they moved forward and to set a timeline. He noted that a timeline would give staff and the public a better understanding of what the governing bodies would do next and when they could expect that. He hoped that he would see those things and thanked those in attendance.

Chair Hill noted that she had heard that Mayor Schieve and Mayor Lawson wanted to make a motion. Mayor Schieve asked if she could make one additional comment before moving to the motion. She opined that knowing what was fact had become so difficult regarding reporting and apologized as that was the nature of the world in which they lived at the time. She noted that many people had mentioned cost. She stated that 11,000 homes were lost in the L.A. wildfires, and the aftermath accounted for a cost of approximately \$250 billion, which came to a rate of approximately \$22 million per home. She wanted to remind those present that when they discussed cost, they should consider that they would ultimately pay if they did not invest in safety and infrastructure early.

Mayor Schieve opined that to be good fiscal stewards, they would need to be proactive rather than reactive. She noted that governments were good at being reactive, but they had an opportunity to be proactive. She recounted having heard similar statements from others that day and expressed her appreciation for the impressive leadership on display. She noted that she wanted to include those final comments, as she previously had no idea that the cost of the catastrophic event of the L.A. wildfires had reached \$250 billion. She elaborated that such a cost impacted the entire Country, as the economy in L.A. was so large. She asserted that the event served as a good reminder that they had discussed costs but needed to consider the damaging effects of not investing in them.

Councilmember Duerr remarked that there were additional impacts on housing, as they had heard that individuals in the community could not obtain fire insurance in areas such as the north in Verdi and the southern region. Mayor Schieve noted that they had not discussed that. Councilmember Duerr responded that the topic had been mentioned. She stressed that the overflow effects impacted things such as purchasing homes. Mayor Schieve reported that she had recently received a cancellation notice. She opined that many people would experience that and demonstrated the need to continue having similar conversations.

Chair Hill asked County Clerk Jan Galassini whether every jurisdiction would need to make its own motion. Ms. Galassini responded that she believed that was correct, but she might need to verify with the legal counsel. Chair Hill noted that Assistant District Attorney (ADA) Nathan Edwards indicated that she was correct. She stated that they would begin with a motion from the City of Sparks.

Councilmember Paul Anderson made a motion for the City of Sparks.

ADA Nathan Edwards noted that the motion brought forward by the City of Sparks had not included the fire chiefs for the Cities of Reno and Sparks and asked whether that was intentional. He noted that if they wanted to include those fire chiefs, the mover and seconder of that motion would need to agree to that.

Mayor Lawson asked Councilmember Paul Anderson to revise that motion with the inclusion of those fire chiefs.

Councilmember Paul Anderson asked if he would need to repeat the motion from the beginning. ADA Nathan Edwards opined that he would not need to and would only need to state what had been clarified and cast another vote on the revised motion.

Mayor Lawson asked for the amendment to include language considering what was needed by the manager's determination. He suggested they might want more inclusion than just the fire chiefs. ADA Nathan Edwards noted that they could do that if they included that group, so that would be defined, and those individuals could then use their discretion to bring in those that they wanted or needed.

Councilmember Paul Anderson made an amended motion for the City of Sparks with the recommended inclusions.

Councilmember Ebert asked if they had to clarify which jurisdiction the fire chiefs mentioned in the motion belonged to. ADA Nathan Edwards noted that he believed that had been made clear at that point.

Councilmember Rodriguez noted that he had a question for Mayor Lawson regarding the motion from the City of Sparks. He asked whether they would be able to look at setting a timeline to hold themselves accountable to the public. Mayor Lawson asked whether a timeline was necessary. He opined that they all understood the urgency and had identified many easily achievable goals that could be accomplished in the following weeks rather than over months.

Sparks City Manager Loutham addressed Mayor Lawson and proposed that he and his colleagues be given 30 days to coalesce on the topic and report back to the governing bodies with potential options as to how the timeline would play out and direction on how to do so. Mayor Lawson asked whether the motion would need to be amended. Sparks City Manager Loutham opined that they had enough clarity to move forward.

Mayor Schieve asked whether they had a motion, and was told they would proceed with what they had prepared. Mayor Schieve wanted to include in the City of Reno motion that emergency management be embedded in their future agendas, particularly regarding the aftermath and the related details. She opined that those were necessary to understand the challenges in the region and encouraged the other governing bodies to include such matters in their own agendas moving forward as well. She expressed belief that such efforts would help tremendously and would assist in achieving what they desired quickly.

Mayor Schieve made a motion for the City of Reno.

Councilmember Brandi Anderson asked that Mayor Schieve repeat the portion of the motion that mentioned implementing immediate unrestricted automatic aid. She noted that she wanted clarification on that prior to voting on the motion.

Mayor Schieve opined that they should follow exactly what the SFD and the TMFPD did. She asked whether someone would like to come forward to discuss that implementation in more detail. Councilmember Brandi Anderson opined that she needed to first understand how that impacted the City of Reno before voting.

Fire Chief White noted that he could address that topic. He reported hearing that the governing bodies wanted unrestricted automatic aid and opined that to have that aid, they would all need to operate on the same system. He reported that they had one agency move off the Tiburon System and subsequently lost all visibility of where those associated resources were. He suspected much of the hesitation regarding unrestricted automatic aid agreements stemmed from that event. He opined that if an individual supported unrestricted automatic aid, they would have to be opposed to any fire agencies moving off of a common-based system where they all had equal access. He noted that if they supported the dispatch of the most rapidly available appropriate resource, they would need to consider not supporting any agreement that required an unnecessary transfer of calls and subsequent delays in that process. Mayor Schieve asked if Fire Chief Cochran was present, and Fire Chief White confirmed he was. She opined that they felt strongly about providing the best possible service, and Fire Chief Cochran agreed. She asked what that would look like and asked what the problem was.

Fire Chief Cochran speculated that what Fire Chief White had suggested was regarding the two different systems being utilized. He noted that due to operating on differing systems, there was no unrestricted automatic aid in the system utilized by the SFD and the TMFPD at the time, which was the same challenge the RFD had. He noted that the fire agencies could all get there by coming together on a shared system. He reiterated his full agreement with Mayor Schieve's earlier statement about providing the best possible service and identifying a solution to get there. He noted that there needed to be a recognition that those efforts could not be achieved through agreement alone. He reported that they had done extensive automatic aid in the areas where jurisdictions overlapped, which was built into dispatch. He acknowledged that the automatic aid at that time was

clunky and occasionally resulted in duplicating efforts. He noted that a shared system would eliminate those information pain points in the transfers between jurisdictions, as they had to take calls from 911, transfer that to a different system, and potentially transfer those calls back, resulting in the possibility of losing information with each of those transfers.

Councilmember Duerr asked whether that would happen in September of that year and whether he was referring to the shared CAD system. She noted that she had not heard the word *immediate* in Mayor Schieve's earlier motion. She responded to Councilmember Brandi Anderson by stating that the shared system was expected to be implemented in the fall. She asked if she was correct in that expectation.

Fire Chief Cochran noted that he referred to the CAD system and agreed that if nothing had slipped, the target date for implementation was September of that year. He noted that he wanted to state that they could move to a shared system immediately, but that was a significant amount of work and would involve moving twice, both at that time and again when they had the new CAD system. Councilmember Duerr asked if they could plan to move systems when the shared CAD system was completed, which she opined was Mayor Schieve's intent. Mayor Schieve agreed.

Councilmember Brandi Anderson stated that she had only wanted clarification, as there were actual impacts to the City of Reno, and she wanted to ensure they all understood what they were voting on.

Mayor Schieve described her goal as wanting to ensure they were doing the best they possibly could for every single resident in the region, regardless of what that looked like. She noted that the hard part for her was that the matter was not about whether or not that would happen, only when. She asserted that they were at that point due to the fires, which she described as frightening. She expressed that she experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) when they pushed things off or moved at slow government speeds. She emphasized that people were frustrated with that and did not want to see that anymore. She suggested they could see those opinions from any social media posts or national media pieces. She guaranteed that many of those who were not aligned with those thoughts would not be serving in their positions after they moved forward with the following election. She emphasized that significant work might be involved, which could take time, but they had to complete that work immediately.

Councilmember Brandi Anderson indicated her concern was that the motion the City of Reno brought forward was not as specific as the concepts they were discussing. She opined that exploring all options for all aid and improved services was necessary. She reiterated that the motion for the City of Reno was too narrow compared to the City of Sparks and the County. Mayor Schieve stated that she experienced difficulty when she knew other jurisdictions were taking all options for aid and improved services, and she had to ask why the City of Reno was not. She stressed that they had to provide the best service, which mattered to prove they were doing what they said they would. Councilmember

Brandi Anderson agreed by stating that the shared dispatch system demonstrated that and presented a massive opportunity for them. Mayor Schieve noted her agreement.

Fire Chief Cochran clarified that the other jurisdictions did not operate on enhanced automatic aid, as they suffered from the same impediment that the RFD did due to operating different systems, CADs, and communications. He noted that whatever enhanced automatic aid was, that was not being done at that time. Mayor Schieve indicated that others had said there were no boundaries between the two and asked why they had said that the City of Reno still had those boundaries. Fire Chief Cochran disagreed and stated they had programmed the ability to cross boundaries into RFD dispatch.

Councilmember Duerr asked if they could amend the motion to include the goal of achieving unrestricted automatic aid in conjunction with the regional CAD system. Councilmember Brandi Anderson noted that she was comfortable with the motion included on the slide titled *Recommended Motion*, which was displayed on the screen behind them. Mayor Schieve stated that she had already made the motion for the City of Reno, that the motion was seconded, and a discussion was held afterward. She asked for a vote on that motion.

Chair Hill noted that they would move on to the BCC and BOFC and indicated that Commissioner Garcia looked as though she wanted to make a motion. Commissioner Garcia moved to direct City Managers, the County Manager, and all fire chiefs to work together to gather additional information to assess needs, costs, and impacts to help guide the process of determining options for enhanced regional fire options.

Commissioner Andriola seconded the motion and asked to provide a comment for consideration. She acknowledged that they had all discussed unrestricted mutual aid and that they had a very clear understanding of the distinction. She hoped that any confusion had been clarified. She opined that including a direction for investigating a policy they could put into place would be very helpful. She expressed that she did not want to convolute Commissioner Garcia's motion. She noted that from the beginning of their discussion, she had expressed that she understood that they could investigate policy implementation right away. She reiterated her belief that looking into potential policy and including that in the motion would be helpful. She referred to Councilmember Brandi Anderson's earlier statements and clarified that her recommendation was not intended to exclude any other opportunities. Councilmember Duerr asked if she had meant to say unrestricted *automatic* aid rather than unrestricted *mutual* aid. Commissioner Andriola clarified that she meant unrestricted automatic aid and wanted policy implementation to be considered.

Chair Hill noted that the City of Reno had put together a motion that included that. Commissioner Andriola acknowledged that she had heard that. Chair Hill opined that the inclusion was great. Commissioner Garcia accepted Commissioner Andriola's recommendation as the motioner, and Commissioner Andriola approved that as the seconder. Chair Hill asked if there were any questions on the motion and stated that none had been indicated.

On motion by Commissioner Garcia, seconded by Commissioner Andriola, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Vice Chair Herman absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item B2 be directed with the recommended amendments from the Board.

**25-044F      AGENDA ITEM C1 Announcements/Reports.**

Commissioner Clark noted that they were preparing for adjournment and leaving the meeting early compared to what would be expected of a standard Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting. He noted his pride in that fact and reiterated that the duration of the meeting had been comparatively brief.

Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr stated that the City of Reno management staff would try to get something to the Reno City Council within approximately 30 days. She indicated that they would likely need to reconvene to hear the information expected to be prepared by staff to provide additional direction, given the upcoming legislative session. She asked for that to be considered in preparation for the next meeting and for that to be included on a future agenda.

Reno City Councilmember Meghan Ebert indicated her interest in reconvening to review the transition process for integrating into one emergency response system. She noted her desire to address any discovered issues, work toward solving those issues, and identify the necessary actions to include that information in future agendas. She acknowledged the necessity of completing those tasks if they intended to enact the desired changes.

**25-045F      AGENDA ITEM D1 Public Comment.**

On the call for public comment, Mr. Mark Neumann noted that he had been present at the meeting since 7:00 a.m. and attested that the latest he had stayed for a meeting in the past was 9:00 p.m. Mr. Neumann recalled that Mayor Schieve had introduced the question of whether there had been an existing plan with Emergency Medical Services (EMS). He asked if anyone present had seen an evacuation map of their local area. He noted that he had been asked that question and where people should go during evacuations by several individuals throughout the County. He indicated that the different Boards had deliberated on the issue of why evacuees were going toward the fire during emergencies. He stressed that those actions resulted from residents not knowing which direction to go, taking the wrong turn, and ultimately traveling toward the fire. He recommended that any decisions regarding EMS should be made to ensure that citizens knew which way to evacuate. He referred to his long-term residency in the area and noted that the fire departments of Washoe County used to get along amicably. He opined that someone in charge in the past had caused anger and disagreements among one another, which ultimately worsened the situation. He requested that if actions were taken to right past disputes, they would need to ensure that fire department leadership would not cause a recurrence of similar critical disagreements over the coming years. He attested that if that decision needed to be approved by the Nevada Legislature, they were already behind



schedule and late to act on the issue. He opined that there was inconsistency among Nevada State Senators and Nevada Assemblymembers in their ability to effectively address issues, indicating they did not always get things right. He mentioned the capacity of legislators to draft a limited number of bills and noted that they had likely already written all they could for the year.


Ms. Shirley Folkins-Roberts, Chair of the Board of Directors for the Regional Emergency Medical Service Authority (REMSA), introduced herself and expressed her intent to finish Mr. Barry Duplantis' earlier remarks. She attested that she represented the REMSA team and the REMSA Board of Directors, which she noted comprised representation from the three regional hospital systems. She thanked all those present on behalf of the REMSA Board of Directors for coming together and sharing a passion for the community. She expressed her gratitude to first responders, who she believed saved many homes during the Davis fire. She reported that REMSA had demonstrated 40 years of experience in regionalization for emergency medical response and served as a good model. She expressed that REMSA staff were very excited about and supportive of the discussions to evaluate the regionalization of fire response systems. She noted her anticipation of REMSA playing a role in those efforts, participating in further discussions, and partnering with policymakers and first responders. She asserted that REMSA would look forward to standing with those groups as a partner while they considered the implementation of regional fire services.

\* \* \* \* \*

**11:43 a.m.** There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

  
ALEXIS HILL, Chair  
Truckee Meadows Fire  
Protection District

ATTEST:

*for*  Chief Deputy  
JANIS GALASSINI, Washoe County Clerk  
and Ex-Officio Clerk, Truckee Meadows  
Fire Protection District  
Minutes Prepared By:  
Brooke Koerner, Deputy County Clerk

