BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

TUESDAY 10:00 A.M. OCTOBER 6, 2026

PRESENT:

Clara Andriola, Chair
Mariluz Garcia, Vice Chair
Alexis Hill, Commissioner (by phone)
Jeanne Herman, Commissioner

Evonne Strickland, Deputy County Clerk
Richard Edwards, Fire Chief
Jennifer Gustafson, Deputy District Attorney

ABSENT:

Michael Clark, Commissioner

The Board convened at 10:01 a.m. in regular session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, Deputy County Clerk Evonne Strickland called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

26-164F **AGENDA ITEM 3** Public Comment.

Sam Hicks displayed a document, a copy was placed on file with the Clerk. He provided the Board with an update on the Bull Fire and acknowledged the significant fire activity Washoe County had experienced and the destructive and traumatic impacts on the community. He indicated that the tactics employed had the highest probability of success and the lowest risk, allowing fire crews to meet the fire's objectives and achieve containment. He suggested that the tactics would ensure the fire had little chance of movement and would remain within its current footprint until it was fully extinguished. He thanked the cooperating partners, community members, and citizens for their continued support, even as they were still recovering from previous devastating fires. He recognized the efforts of the men and women on the ground working to fully contain the Bull Fire and restore the affected land. He noted that the Bull Fire had burned 1,529 acres and was 56 percent contained, with 228 personnel assigned and costs totaling approximately $4 million to date. He indicated that the containment date was set for October 15 or sooner. He confirmed that one Recreational Vehicle (RV) had been destroyed on the northeast side of the fire. He provided an operational update and displayed a map and an acreage breakdown by jurisdiction. He reported that the fire had burned 924 acres of United States Forest Service (USFS) land, 585 acres of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) land, and 18 acres of the City of Reno's land. He explained that, based on the recent map, increased containment had occurred in the far southeast corner and towards the west, as indicated by a black line on the displayed document. He mentioned that the fire was still being secured and mopped up on the west side, where the bulk of the work was occurring.

He stated that approximately 12 crews continued working to contain the fire. He pointed out that firefighters had accessed the entire perimeter of the fire, either by mechanized equipment or by physically walking it.

Chair Andriola explained that public comment was limited to three minutes, but allowed Mr. Hicks additional time to complete his update, given its importance.

Mr. Hicks emphasized that current operations were focused on the west side of the fire, where hotshot crews were working on containment, mopping up, and securing the area. He said that the east side of the fire had crossed into the previously burned Hawk Fire area, which had already been contained. He mentioned that the TMFPD Fire Chief Richard Edwards had his contact information, and he invited Board members to contact him with any additional questions or to visit the Incident Command Post (ICP), located in the back parking lot of Boomtown Casino Resort.

Chair Andriola thanked everyone for their assistance and continued support.

Sandee Tibbett displayed documents, copies of which were distributed to the Board and placed on file with the Clerk. She read from her document, expressing her belief that insufficient air support and ground suppression during the Hawk Fire contributed to the loss of homes and lives. She requested a transparent explanation of the lack of response and accountability from leadership regarding the resources deployed.

26-165F **AGENDA ITEM 4** Announcements/Reports.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Fire Chief Richard Edwards shared that weather and fuel conditions in Washoe County remained highly conducive to wildfires, as demonstrated by the Bull Fire. He emphasized the importance of defensible space, vegetation management, and home hardening. He indicated that the District had begun its Green Waste Program, with the first collections taking place at Silver Lake and Eastlake. He reported that the Wildland Fuels Division collected 549 loads of vegetation, filling 16 dumpsters across the 2 drop-off locations. He commended the team for its tremendous work and noted that the program appeared to be underutilized, with additional opportunities for community members to dispose of green waste throughout October. He opined that substantial defensible space work was needed throughout the County to help protect homes during major disasters and wildfires. He said that the next green waste event was scheduled for Sunday, October 18, at Lazy 5 Regional Park in Spanish Springs. He encouraged community members to visit the TMFPD's website for additional information about program dates and locations. He expressed his appreciation for the Wildland Fuels Division, noting that although the team was overextended, crew members not actively fighting the Bull Fire assisted with green waste collection.

Chair Andriola expressed appreciation for the ongoing firefighting efforts and the update on the Bull Fire.

CONSENT ITEMS – 5A THROUGH 5C

26-166F **5A** Recommendation to approve the meeting minutes from September 1, 2026, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting (All Commission Districts).

26-167F **5B** Recommendation to ratify Fiscal Year 2025-2026 reimbursements from the Washoe County, Nevada, Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust Fund to Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District for the cost of retiree health insurance premiums in the amount of $168,280. Monies transferred from this trust have been placed into the District's General Fund (All Commission Districts).

26-168F **5C** Recommendation to approve the re-classification of one (1) EMS Coordinator Regular NV PERS position at an annual salary range of $90,833 to $118,060 to an Account Clerk Regular NV PERS position at an annual salary range of $60,153 to $78,249 (All Commission Districts).

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

On motion by Vice Chair Garcia, seconded by Commissioner Herman, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Commissioner Clark absent, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 5A through 5C be approved.

PROCLAMATIONS

26-169F **AGENDA ITEM 6** Recommendation for the Board of Fire Commissioners to proclaim October 4th through the 10th of 2026 as Fire Prevention Week throughout Washoe County, and urge all residents to learn about and practice safe charging habits.

Fire Marshal Jennifer Williamson read the proclamation.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Garcia, seconded by Commissioner Herman, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Commissioner Clark absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 6 be adopted.

26-170F **AGENDA ITEM 7** International Association of Fire Fighters Local 2487 Report.

International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 2487 President Mark Thyer thanked Vice Chair Garcia for the opportunity to participate in the kickoff of Breast Cancer Awareness Month and attend the Paint Nevada Pink event in downtown Reno. He conveyed his organization's support for the community and acknowledged the

attendance of breast cancer survivors, advocates, and personnel from the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Engine 40. He pointed out that the recent Bull Fire was another human-caused fire affecting the region. He noted that Peavine Mountain had been impacted by numerous fires over the past several months. He emphasized that the Bull Fire's location in an unpopulated area helped limit property damage and loss. He stressed that the fire highlighted the region's extremely dry conditions. He cautioned that a wind-driven fire, such as the Hawk Fire, could cause significant damage even if it started small, and noted that firefighters had been dispatched early to the incident. He reaffirmed that firefighters would continue responding to fires wherever they were dispatched. He highlighted that human-caused fires remained a concern in the region and explained that the recent fires were not caused by lightning, or acts of God but were caused by humans.

Mr. Thyer announced an upcoming breast cancer awareness T-shirt event hosted by the Truckee Meadows Firefighter Foundation (TMFF), in partnership with the District and IAFF Local 2487. He noted that the event was scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, at 4:00 p.m. at the Hideout Lounge. He explained that the event would promote the T-shirts and raise community awareness during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, with proceeds benefiting Moms on the Run.

Chair Andriola thanked Vice Chair Garcia and the TMFPD for representing the District at the Paint Nevada Pink event.

26-171F **AGENDA ITEM 8** Fire Chief Report

A. Informational briefing on operational matters and activities for the month of September 2026 and October 2026 to include the following items:

1. Capital Projects Apparatus Update
2. Capital Projects Construction Update
3. Regional Dispatch Update
4. Emergency Management Training Request

B. Monthly Response Statistics for August 2026

C. Monthly Prevention Statistics for August 2026

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Fire Chief Richard Edwards said the new engines were being upfitted and hoped that one would be available for display at the November Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC) meeting. He mentioned that funding options for the Washoe Valley Consolidated Fire Station were being explored. He stated that within the past month, he had met with representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to discuss available grant and loan opportunities. He shared that, unfortunately, Nevada had not been awarded any USDA grant funds for rural fire protection services during the current budget cycle. He informed that the TMFPD was working with the USDA to review its loan programs and determine whether they were

comparable to the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB), where the firehouse loans were currently held. He informed that he had met with representatives from the offices of Senators Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen to learn about Congressional Directed Spending (CDS) and its requirements. He hoped that the information would help identify a funding mechanism for the Washoe Valley Consolidated Fire Station. He mentioned that he would prepare for 2027's grant applications through the end of 2026.

Chief Edwards stated that regional dispatch continued to progress, with several meetings held in September. He explained that one meeting focused on space requirements, during which an architect evaluated the existing space at the Spectrum Boulevard location to determine the total floor space needed to accommodate all participating agencies. He indicated that surplus school sites were being explored to assess their feasibility as a regional dispatch location. He mentioned that the expenses associated with relocating the technology from Spectrum Boulevard to a new location would be considered, noting that previous estimates were in the millions. He stated that there had been meetings that included regional leadership, representatives from the Cities of Sparks and Reno's Managers' Offices, dispatch leadership, and the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority Health (REMSA Health), to discuss governance and finance. He believed that those conversations would help identify barriers early on, avoiding last-minute governance or finance challenges. He shared that the Hexagon Managers Board was being considered as a governance model that would allow each agency to retain its autonomy while maintaining a voice and vote in dispatch operations. He pointed out that various financing models, including cost-per-call and usage-based formulas, would also be evaluated to ensure an equitable approach for all partners, regardless of agency size, call volume, or service utilization. He said that the regional dispatch team met monthly to address governance and finance. He mentioned that a meeting with the architects was scheduled for October 22 to discuss recommendations for additional space to accommodate all participating agencies. He stated that the team had established June 30, 2027, as an internal target date for implementing regional dispatch. He acknowledged that the timeline was aggressive, but opined that it would help maintain momentum, encourage collaboration, and drive progress toward the goal. He expressed confidence that the team's efforts and cooperation among the participating agencies would help identify a viable solution within the proposed timeframe.

Chief Edwards stated that at the previous BOFC meeting, his office was requested to provide emergency management training. He explained that the TMFPD had collaborated with the Cities of Reno and Sparks to organize a joint workshop for elected officials focused on emergency management and large-scale incident training. He mentioned that the City of Reno had worked with Liberty Dogs to secure a meeting room for the workshop, which was scheduled for Thursday, January 28, 2027, at 9:00 a.m. He stated that the participating entities would be contacted to ensure the event was added to their calendars. He said that members of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC) would also be invited to attend. He remarked that the workshop would be facilitated by Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jacob Green of Jacob Green & Associates, who had extensive experience in emergency management and worked with elected leaders across

the Country. He hoped attendees would gain valuable knowledge from the training to help with preparedness for future disasters.

Chair Andriola thanked Chief Edwards for coordinating the regional dispatch efforts and noted it would be a standing agenda item. She hoped that the June 30, 2027, target date would be met. She expressed her appreciation for the tribes' inclusion in the emergency management training.

Vice Chair Garcia thanked Chief Edwards for his continued work on the Washoe Valley Consolidated Fire Station and asserted that it was a priority for the Board. She acknowledged that land was available and there was a need, and hoped that a funding source could be identified. She questioned the number of Octave blocker cases and asked how many were related to fire services versus law enforcement.

Chief Edwards responded that he did not have the breakdown, but thought the primary challenge in implementing Octave involved the law enforcement component of the records management system. He explained that for fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) functioned solely as a CAD with additional application programming interfaces (APIs) and plug-ins that supported records management, staffing, and other technologies. He pointed out that, for law enforcement, those different programs, including records management and background checks, were built into their CAD system, which he believed created a layer of complexity. He said that when adjustments were made, there could be lingering effects from other changes made within the software. He indicated that the focus had been on the records management system and on overcoming some of those obstacles. He surmised that while there had been recent successes, new blocker cases were being added, and that the number of blocker cases had been around six to eight for several months. He hoped to have resolution soon. Vice Chair Garcia thanked Chief Edwards for the explanation.

26-172F **AGENDA ITEM 9** Recommendation to approve a Health Benefits Program for District employees, dependents, and retirees for an estimated total cost to the District of $2.9 million and authorize the Chair of the Board of Fire Commissioners to execute all insurance contracts and service agreements pertinent to the approved Health Benefits Program for calendar year 2027. (All Commission Districts).

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Human Resources (HR) Manager Carla Arribillaga stated that the District's current health plans were being renewed for 2027. She mentioned that the TMFPD was currently contracted with Hometown Health, which had been acquired by Kaiser Permanente in collaboration with Renown Health. She explained that the TMFPD would keep the same benefit plans, including the High-Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) and Preferred Provider Organization (PPO), with both national and non-national plans. She indicated that the initial renewal quote reflected a 15 percent increase, which was reduced to 8 percent through negotiations. She shared that the increase would be a total medical premium cost of approximately $250,000 for the year for employees and the District. She clarified that there would be no

changes to dental, vision, life, Health Savings Account (HSA), or Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA).

Chair Andriola expressed appreciation for Ms. Arribillaga's efforts to negotiate the renewal increase down to 8 percent. She acknowledged the generally high cost of insurance. Ms. Arribillaga stated that insurance rates were increasing Nationwide.

Vice Chair Garcia expressed concern about the 8 percent increase and asked whether the reduction from the initial 15 percent renewal quote to 8 percent had occurred before or after Kaiser Permanente's acquisition of Hometown Health. Ms. Arribillaga clarified that the negotiation had occurred after the acquisition was announced and noted that the transition to Kaiser Permanente was known. Vice Chair Garcia asked whether employees would retain access to the same Hometown Health network providers or would be required to switch to Kaiser Permanente providers. Ms. Arribillaga said that the existing providers and approvals would remain unchanged, and pointed out that Pinnacle Medical Group was the only provider group the TMFPD would lose.

Vice Chair Garcia questioned what type of care Pinnacle Medical Group provided. Ms. Arribillaga answered that Pinnacle Medical Group was an all-in-one provider, similar to an urgent care clinic, where patients could receive care and have lab work performed. She added that Pinnacle also had private providers and offered services similar to those of Kaiser Permanente, but on a smaller scale.

Vice Chair Garcia expressed concern and noted that she had attended several community meetings where residents shared concerns about having to change doctors after receiving care from the same provider for 20 years, or having to use out-of-network providers. She asked Ms. Arribillaga whether she had heard similar concerns. Ms. Arribillaga answered that she had not and explained that transitioning to Kaiser Permanente would expand provider options. She mentioned that Kaiser Permanente had six locations that offered comprehensive care, as well as access to the entire Hometown Health network, including Renown.

Vice Chair Gracia questioned if there was any indication when the term was up, if there could be another increase. Ms. Arribillaga commented that annual increases were expected and added that the current 8 percent increase was among the lowest the TMPFD had seen in recent years. She shared that increases would depend on the types and levels of claims.

Commissioner Herman thanked Ms. Arribillaga and acknowledged the difficulty of negotiating insurance. She asked if there were concerns about Kaiser Permanente and the quality of care it provided. Ms. Arribillaga said she could not yet assess Kaiser Permanente's services because the TMFPD had not utilized the provider. She stated that she would have a better answer in 2027 and added that some staff members who had previously used Kaiser Permanente were satisfied with its services.

Commissioner Hill recognized Ms. Arribillaga for her efforts.

Chair Andriola acknowledged that insurance premiums were influenced by claims in the actuarial model. She wondered whether the wellness doctor recently brought in by the TMFPD Fire Chief Richard Edwards, who was available to all the TMFPD staff, could help reduce the number of claims over time. While recognizing that some illnesses could not be prevented, she encouraged staff to monitor claims to assess the program's impact. She believed the program was a beneficial investment and encouraged employees to participate and to share information about it with others. She expressed appreciation that the anticipated renewal increase had been negotiated down to nearly half of the initial 15 percent quote.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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

10:36 a.m. **Commissioner Hill left the meeting.**

26-173F **AGENDA ITEM 10** Announcements/Reports.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Fire Chief Richard Edwards shared that Emergent Global Solutions (EGS) had recently provided the draft Regional Fire and Emergency Medical Services Feasibility, Efficiency, and Service Enhancement Assessment Study, which was available on the Regional Fire Services Study Board (RFSSB) website. He explained that members of the public could submit comments on the draft report through October 14, using the digital comment tool. He mentioned that written comments would be provided to EGS and included in the packet for the October 22, 2026, RFSSB meeting. He added that from October 15 through October 22, 2026, the public could submit additional written comments to Washoe County for inclusion in the record for the October 22 meeting. He noted that, due to posting deadlines, written comments received during that period would not be included in the meeting packet. He noted that the agenda and meeting packet would be posted on October 19. He stated that the October 22 meeting would be held at 6:30 p.m. in the County Commission Chambers, where the consultants would present the draft study.

Vice Chair Garcia informed that she had shared the same information with her Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) at its recent meeting.

Chair Andriola thanked Vice Chair Garcia for facilitating the feasibility study and added that she looked forward to the upcoming meeting.

26-174F **AGENDA ITEM 11** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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10:39 a.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

CLARA ANDRIOLA, Chair
Truckee Meadows Fire
Protection District

ATTEST:

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

Minutes Prepared By:
Jessica Melka, Deputy County Clerk