

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

TUESDAY

9:00 a.m.

APRIL 16, 2019

PRESENT:

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

Nancy Parent, County Clerk
Charles Moore, Fire Chief
David Watts-Vial, Deputy District Attorney

The Board convened at 9:00 a.m. in regular session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

19-047F AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

19-048F AGENDA ITEM 4 Announcements/Reports.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore stated Agenda Item 8 would be pulled due to the Interlocal Contract not being received.

CONSENT ITEMS – 5A through 5C

19-049F 5A Recommendation to approve the minutes from the March 19, 2019 meeting. (All Commissioner Districts.)

19-050F 5B Recommendation to authorize Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District to pay Workers' Compensation Heart and Lung Claims invoice dated February 28, 2019 from the City of Reno in the amount, not to exceed \$34,862.34 per the Reno TMFPD Interlocal Agreement, subject to review by our independent actuary. (All Commission Districts.)

19-051F 5C Recommendation to approve a class specification titled Human Resources Manager and to reclassify the vacant position of Human Resources Administrator to an unclassified/appointed position titled Human Resources Manager. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Herman, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 5A through 5C be approved. Any and all Resolutions or Interlocal Agreements pertinent to Consent Agenda Items 5A through 5C are attached hereto and made a part of the minutes thereof.

19-052F AGENDA ITEM 6 I.A.F.F. Local 2487 Report.

International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 2487 President Ian Satterfield stated the 7th annual Guns and Hoses golf tournament was scheduled for April 29. He expressed excitement about the event and said it sold out in just over a month. The goal was to raise more than \$130,000 for the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation. He thanked the Washoe County Sheriff's Association for its participation and said they worked together and participated with the event annually. He thanked Equipment Operator Jon Sieben for organizing the event.

Mr. Satterfield stated dispatchers who handled 911 calls were highly trained and did an outstanding job. He expressed concern about the current process to dispatch emergency medical service (EMS) calls. He spoke regarding an incident that occurred when he was working at Station 46 and crews were dispatched to an EMS call for a sick person. He indicated the call was answered by a City of Reno dispatcher and transferred to the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) and the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA). He said the District responded to the call with REMSA right behind them. When they reached the address, REMSA was staged a few houses away, which was not uncommon if they did not know where they were going. He stated the crew followed normal protocol and went to the door. Dispatch called and informed them REMSA was notified to stage out of the area due to a possible domestic violence situation. He thought information was being lost or misinterpreted and could put firefighters at risk. Crews needed to be aware of a potential dangerous situation, and many felt Sheriff's Office dispatchers should take 911 calls and notify crews to ensure safe situations for first responders.

Mr. Satterfield stated Chief Deputy Scott Gorgon was retiring. He thanked Chief Deputy Gorgon for the time and energy he invested and said he was instrumental in moving the TMFPD forward. Mr. Satterfield said staff would continue to build on the solid foundation Chief Deputy Gorgon built.

Mr. Satterfield said discussion about an established peer support team occurred at the previous Local 2487 meeting. He stated Captain Derek Reid was instrumental in leading the program and would talk about the details of the program.

Captain Reid told a story about responding to a call that involved a pediatric drowning. After 20 minutes of attempted resuscitation the child was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased. Captain Reid stated this incident

resonated with him because he had a 3-year-old child who resembled many of the characteristics of the child that drowned. At that time, peer support was not a consideration.

Captain Reid said the exposure to traumas first responders experienced affected their everyday lives and mental health. He worked in this region for 25 years and said there was not much in this town that did not remind him of some incident. He indicated post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was as high as 20 percent in fire service nationally and firefighters' exposure could resemble a combat veteran after returning from war. Suicides involving fire service personnel exceeded line-of-duty deaths since 2012. He indicated line-of-duty death statistics were tracked completely, although only 20 to 30 percent of suicide data was being captured. He stated the stigma in the firehouse was recognized as one of the biggest deterrents of asking for help when needed. He said staff was expected to be at 100 percent all the time for the public in this line of work. An employee with PTSD could show signs of weakness or an inability to perform their job, which could lead to a fear of repercussions from their employer.

Captain Reid thought the employee assistance program (EAP) failed employees; 50 percent of employees were not getting to the proper clinicians in a timely manner and lacked any understanding of fire service culture. He said some issues had occurred in the EAP program where individuals went through the program, were assigned to counselors, had their three visits, continued treatment, and then received a bill for services because the program did not cover specialized clinicians. For firefighters to receive clinical assistance for PTSD, they needed help to go through the due diligence process. He said training taught lifesaving skills but nothing about the emotional intelligence or resilience of first responders. He stated firefighter suicide statistics were extreme and the goal of peer support was to recognize specific behaviors before it was too late. Peer supporters received specialized training in behavioral health to identify emotional distress and unhealthy coping mechanisms. He said the program had designated safe places for firefighters to speak privately about emotional issues without being uncomfortable or fearing retribution. He said peer supporters were trained to follow up, especially when an individual was off duty for an extended time. He explained peer supporters were subject to the same emotional issues as firefighters but were able to process traumatic situations in a more productive manner.

Captain Reid stated IAFF Local 2487 and the TMFPD worked cooperatively to develop this program and it was important that both entities were involved and supported it. He stated a survey was conducted to select the most trusted firefighters in extreme situations and 30 individuals were selected to be trained as peer supporters. He said the next 30 people involved with the peer support program were from out-of-state departments. He said instructors who taught classes to peer supporters were from fire departments in New York, Phoenix, and Canada who had been performing peer support for many years. He said the District interviewed 25 firefighters who went through peer supporter training and were part of the current team. The team would interview and vet counselors and psychologists to ensure they would provide the best PTSD assistance to first responders. He stated the program was on Facebook and posted training

information. A smartphone app was being developed for quick and easy access to peer supporters. He indicated firefighters were subjected to stressful and dangerous situations on a daily basis; the peer support system made them more emotionally resilient and better able to help each other and citizens of the County. Additionally, another level of chaplaincy was being developed for more emotional and spiritual support.

Commissioner Jung stated this was an uncomfortable conversation for first responders. She thought Captain Reid highlighted it well with his personal experience and said something so traumatic could not be moved past easily. She commended Captain Reid for coming forward with his story and for championing the program. She said there was a code of silence with regards to addressing traumatizing situations. She thought training should include learning how to process traumatic events on a regular basis and veteran firefighters could encourage new hires to utilize the peer support program. She stated her father was a war combat veteran with PTSD although he did not speak of it. She thought this program needed to be in the budget. She commented EAP services often did not have a good reputation for being helpful and thought this was a global issue. She wanted this program to be front loaded in the budget every year. She said she went on a ride-along many years ago and saw the worst accident she had ever seen. Captain Reid reminded Commissioner Jung he was on that call with her. Commissioner Jung said it triggered some PTSD, though the firefighters were fine. She had wanted this program to happen for many years and was thankful it was coming to fruition; she would do anything she could to help it be successful. She thought REMSA and the Sheriff's Office (SO) should also have a similar program.

Commissioner Jung wanted to know the process to fill the position of Chief Gorgon in light of his retirement.

Commissioner Jung asked Ms. Satterfield about personal safety for firefighters when it came to criminal or violent acts. Mr. Satterfield stated it was not detailed in the dispatch system contract. Commissioner Jung wanted him to look into having that added. She also asked about the chain of command for communication. Mr. Satterfield explained a 911 call went to the City of Reno dispatch department and EMS calls would be transferred to REMSA. The City of Reno dispatcher would then send the information from their screen to the SO, which was the information the District received. He said there was no communication between REMSA and SO dispatchers at that point. Further relay of information would take place via telephone to the SO dispatchers and also be radioed to the District.

Commissioner Jung clarified Mr. Satterfield's concern was that REMSA was informed to stage down while firefighters were at the door of what could have been a dangerous situation. She wanted this topic placed on an agenda for discussion. Mr. Satterfield stated there was a gap in the service provided. He thought work was being done to resolve this issue but reiterated they were willing to assist and help in any way they could.

Chair Hartung said gaps in the dispatch system had recently been discussed. He wanted the peer support program to be discussed in a future agenda item about working collaboratively with other entities.

Mr. Satterfield stated the peer support team had been working collaboratively and he believed there was money in the budget for this year. He indicated Chief Moore saw the importance of the issue and was working with them to move forward.

Commissioner Jung thought this could affect individuals countywide, not just first responders, but anyone who dealt with traumatic events such as bomb threats. She addressed a fire in Washoe Valley where Commissioners were informed there would be deaths as a result. She expressed gratitude there were no deaths but she felt that trauma could trigger PTSD.

Chief Moore indicated there was \$25,000 in the budget to move this program forward. He stated he could relate to PTSD as his first call as an emergency medical technician was a car accident that had a lasting effect on him. He commended Captain Reid for his work on this project.

19-053F AGENDA ITEM 7 Fire Chief Report

A. Informational briefing on operational matters and activities for the month of March and April 2019 to include the following items:

1. Sparks Fire Department Enhanced Auto Aid Statistics
2. Review of Response Statistics for March 2019
3. Update on Hidden Valley Fire Station Development
4. Update on New Apparatus Delivery
5. Update on Open Burning

B. Fire Prevention Update (Deputy Chief Beaver)

1. Fire Prevention Statistics
2. Meeting with Community Boards and Association Updates

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore stated automatic aid and response statistics were listed in the staff report.

Chief Moore said the Community Services Department (CSD) asked that the special use permit in Hidden Valley include both the residence just purchased and for the new truck bay. The initial plan was to remodel the house immediately and then move on to the truck bay but CSD wanted them together. He stated consultants were hired to complete the plans for each building, which would be submitted in May and heard by the Board of Adjustments in July. Once approval was received, they would start on the remodel and he hoped crews would occupy the house by Thanksgiving, while the truck bay was being completed.

9:33 a.m. Commissioner Berkbigler left meeting

Chief Moore stated two new water tenders had arrived and were parked outside for viewing. He displayed photos of the apparatus, which were placed on file with the Clerk. He said the new tenders were state-of-the-art and he thought they would be placed in service in time for wildland fire season. He said additional equipment would be added to the tenders within the next 45 days. He indicated one tender would be based in Mogul at Station 40 and one at Eastlake Station 32.

Deputy Chief Lisa Beaver said 1,396 permits were issued since open burning started, though only 21 approved burn days occurred due to weather conditions.

9:36 a.m. The Board recessed.

9:48 a.m. The Board reconvened with Commissioner Lucey and Commissioner Berkbigler absent.

Deputy Chief Beaver spoke about allowable burning and displayed a photo of an incident that happened in Verdi on a non-burn day; the photo was placed on file with the Clerk. She stated it was a windy day and she followed a smoke column to the home. The wind pulled embers off the top of the burn pile, which was surrounded by cheat grass and debris. She stated no one was monitoring the burn so she contacted the owner inside. The home owner indicated he was not aware it was a non-burn day and Chief Beaver provided education about allowable burning. Homeowners needed to call to confirm whether it was an allowable burn day. She explained a burn pile could not be left unattended and it was required to have a fire extinguisher ready at all times.

9:51 a.m. Commissioner Lucey returned to the meeting.

Deputy Chief Beaver stated the District reached out to 1,337 students and 137 parents by participating in school career days since the first of the year. She said she met with the Hidden Valley Homeowners Association (HOA), which she described as a successful meeting, although few homeowners were in attendance. She noted the District was attempting to educate the community about ember storms by providing links to videos and handouts. She stated HOA meetings were scheduled for Southwest Vistas, Arrowcreek, Virginia Foothills, and Eagle Canyon Estates. She noted she met with the Sun Valley General Improvement District (GID), who wanted to partner with the District to bring education to the community. Certain apparatus and educational information could be brought to the GID film night and other activities. She said the GID was willing to support the District with fuels removal and debris removal by donating a 40-yard container so volunteers could clean up areas in Sun Valley.

Deputy Chief Beaver thanked staff for a decrease in the backlog for plan reviews and inspections processed from 65 to 17 within the past year.

Deputy Chief Beaver stated a total of 69 ashcans had been distributed to the community and she talked about distributing them at HOA meetings.

Commissioner Jung spoke about the Camp Fire that occurred the previous year and stated it was not an anomaly in the west anymore. She said the community needed to be proactive to prevent such horrific fires. She was pleased Deputy Chief Beaver went to the Sun Valley GID and said they were a very engaged board. She said Summit Church had cleaned up the skate park and provided coats to K-12 children. She suggested Deputy Chief Beaver connect with the church for any additional funding that might be needed and said she would help her connect with them. She planned to go to the next GID meeting and said Commissioner Herman might also be interested in attending. She thought a huge difference could be made by working together with organizations that helped the community.

19-054F **AGENDA ITEM 9** Recommendation to approve retroactive and continued purchases for needed supplies, materials, equipment and contractual services from Icarus Fire & Equipment Co. LLC that will exceed in the aggregate \$100,000 during this fiscal year, but will remain within available adopted budget funding. All such purchases will continue to be subject to and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Purchasing Act. (All Commission Districts)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore stated this item was for additional equipment for new water tenders.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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

19-055F **AGENDA ITEM 10** Discussion and possible direction to staff on the renewal of the Cooperative Agreement between the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and the Reno Sparks Indian Colony. (All Commission Districts.)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore stated a new agreement was being negotiated with the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. In the past, the agreement was an automatic aid and mutual aid agreement. The Indian Colony lacked any resources to respond to the District so he wanted Board direction about a fee for service before he moved forward. He wondered whether the District wanted to continue to provide mutual aid to the Colony. He said he was aware the City of Reno responded for the Colony and charged them for the calls. The properties involved in those calls included the 2nd Street Walmart store and CarMax, but there could be others. He noted the staff report included information about the District responding 138 times over the past 3 years, leaving Station 46 vacant.

Chair Hartung wondered how the District would be reimbursed and what the historic fiscal impact was.

Commissioner Jung asked whether Chief Moore had already approached the Indian Colony. Chief Moore said he spoke with them and was waiting for them to provide a geographical map. He noted they had significantly expanded their territory but he did not want to discuss a fee for service unless the Board directed him to do so.

Commissioner Jung asked how often the District responded to the Indian Colony in the past year. She wondered if it was worth responding while receiving nothing in return. She noted each truck was equipped with a chest compression machine. She did not like having a station empty, especially since Station 46 was one of the busiest stations. She said she needed more information before making a decision. Chief Moore stated discussions had been occurring with the Colony for the past few months. He said the District responded to 122 calls for an average of 38 calls per year. He said they recently responded to a structure fire, which required three pieces of the District's apparatus to be out of service. When a structure or brush fire occurred, it resulted in a significant commitment of time and material, but he noted that did not happen often. He stated crews did not need the additional experience because the Spanish Springs station was very busy.

Chair Hartung wanted information about fiscal impacts before providing direction. He was concerned about the growth of the Colony territory.

Chief Moore recommended staff be authorized to approach the Reno/Sparks Indian Colony about a fee for service and directed to bring fiscal impact information back to the Board.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Commissioner Lucey, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Commissioner Berkbigler absent, it was ordered to authorize staff to approach the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony about a fee for service and direct staff to bring fiscal impact information to the Board.

19-056F **AGENDA ITEM 11** Presentation, discussion and possible direction to staff on the Fiscal Year 2019/20 budget for Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District. (All Commission Districts.)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Fiscal Officer Cindy Vance stated the tentative budget was filed with the State and staff would bring it back for review and adoption into the final budget in May. She stated she sought direction at this time. She conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Budget Review Fiscal Year 19/20; Overview – FY 19/20; and General Fund – FY 19/20 (2 slides).

10:10 a.m. Commissioner Berkbigler returned to the meeting.

TMFPD Chief Charles Moore continued the PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Service Level Improvements – 19/20; Planning and Initiatives – 19/20; and Conclusion – 19/20. He stated he wanted to add a full-time public information officer position as Adam Mayberry was on loan from the County. He said Ms. Vance was in need of help and wanted to hire someone to help her and also help with payroll administration. He noted the emergency medical services (EMS) coordinator would assist Division Chief Joseph Kammann administratively with the program. He stated EMS was a significant portion of service delivery and a coordinator would allow Chief Kammann to conduct training. He noted two new engines were in the capital budget and an additional two engines would need to be purchased every year in order to keep them at a 10-year service life. He stated Station 37 would be largely funded in the next fiscal year. He indicated some short-term financing would have to be obtained for all the capital projects due to a lack of cash to pay for the projects outright. He stated discussions needed to occur regarding station locations to best suit the needs of the community. He wanted to review each station's costs going forward and needed to understand what upgrades needed to be made. He said it was possible to split the Stead station to Silver Lake and Lemmon Valley.

Chair Hartung expressed concern about spending more money than the forecasted revenue. He said he recognized there was a robust fund balance but noted any household that spent more than they earned was doomed.

Commissioner Lucey said he understood the service needs in the County were complex. He expressed concern about the need for new capital items while the majority of the budget went towards salaries and benefits. He noted the remodel of the Hidden Valley station would benefit his district. He thought the District needed to be conscientious about where capital money was spent. He said growth and annexation within the County created a challenge.

Commissioner Berkbigher stated she was a proponent of doing something to get the service to Lemmon Valley faster. She liked the idea of splitting the Stead station but wondered how many firefighters were located there, whether the station would cover both locations, and whether additional firefighters would be required. Chief Moore anticipated the Stead station crew could go to the Silver Lake fire station. He thought a study could be done to see if other firefighters could be reduced, crews reallocated, and new hires assigned to fill the Silver Lake station. He wondered if the East Lake and Bowers Mansion stations could be combined into one station at the north end of Washoe Valley, which could then engage Carson City to be a mutual aid partner. He noted technology would need to be improved for Carson City to respond faster. He said that crew could move to Lemmon Valley if an agreement was established with Carson City. He stated another idea for consideration was the location of Reno Engine 6 and the Sparks main headquarters relative to Hidden Valley and the possibility of dispatching the closest unit instead of building a new fire station in Hidden Valley. The Hidden Valley crew could then go down the I-80 corridor to the Apple station, which was to be built within the next four years. He stated this deployment plan needed to be studied and it was his suggestion to increase services without adding personnel. He said discussions had

occurred about this possible plan and thought a study could determine the needed information.

Commissioner Berkbigler expressed concern about coverage not being widespread enough to cover all the areas of the community. She wanted to ensure adequate fire support in the north valleys due to growth. She was apprehensive about doing away with the Hidden Valley station, noting it could be detrimental if another large fire, such as the Little Valley Fire, occurred.

Commissioner Herman mentioned the City of Reno should provide fire services to the north valleys due to the large areas they annexed and were responsible for.

Commissioner Jung wanted a report showing the impact of annexation by the Cities of Reno and Sparks to the County's bottom line over the past five years. She asked about other revenue-generating sources which were available and what it would take to change annexation laws so there was not a revenue competition between the Cities and the County. She stated the County had a dedicated fund for fire services and was fairer to firefighters; a disconnect had been present between the City of Reno and the County over fire services for many years. Noting Chief Moore's request for fire station studies, she said many had already been done and did not think additional studies were needed. She stated the regional plan had not changed and growth was going to the north.

Commissioner Jung asked when the County would be able to stop paying for the workers compensation fund. Ms. Vance stated they would pay until the last person passed and she thought some recipients were in their 50s.

Commissioner Lucey said federal grants had been discussed in a previous meeting to be used to augment some of the programs. He stated he did not see any grant information in the tentative budget and wanted an explanation about what grants were being considered and how they would augment the budget. He spoke about a 10-year vehicle acquisition plan of engines and wondered if moving apparatus from the south to the north would extend their lives.

Chair Hartung wondered whether insurance companies could be billed for EMS calls. He stated that was a potential revenue source and thought it was not the fire service's responsibility to absorb those costs.

Chief Moore said he heard the Commissioners say they wanted efficiency and response. He stated the Cities of Sparks and Reno had the same location issues as the District. He mentioned the closest station Reno had to the Stonegate development was at the Stead airport. Sparks was growing and Station 46 would be the closest to the City of Sparks. As the community grew, it was imperative that the District continued to press for discussions about automatic vehicle location (AVL) response. He said he was not making a recommendation to regionalize but it could correct many serious issues with having independent jurisdictions with full AVL. He stated none of the jurisdictions could continue to add stations, personnel, and engines. He believed a solution would start with

the dispatch system deploying first responders to patients based on proximity; if that occurred, he thought further conversations could be directed by the Board. He thought the way to moderate growth was through AVL response and having closer relationships with regional partners. He said the District needed three things: a competitively paid workforce, capital expenditures, and fire stations.

Commissioner Berkgigler asked whether Chief Moore was working directly with the Sheriff on a resolution to fix dispatch issues. Chief Moore stated they were having conversations. Commissioner Berkgigler thought that was the primary issue that needed to be resolved, otherwise constituents were not being well served. She thought there was a need for more strategically-placed stations in the north valleys.

Commissioner Jung wondered whether conversations had occurred with the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) regarding best-effort calls based on growth. She thought there could be potential new revenue and decreased expenses with REMSA's help. She asked whether the age of the constituents in outlying areas were being considered and said the age demographic in Arrowcreek was higher and they would be more likely to have EMS issues. She did not think younger people should be ignored but they were not as apt to need EMS as an older person. She thought age and demographics should be considered when placing stations. Chief Moore stated that was an insightful question and said he had regular meetings with REMSA President and Chief Executive Officer Dean Dow about the topic. He said it was not sustainable for the District and REMSA to respond to a 911 call with both an ambulance and a fire truck. He thought non-emergency calls needed a different system than people experiencing life-threatening emergencies. He stated Mr. Dow supported co-locating his dispatch center with the District or a regional dispatch center so all calls could be coordinated in one place and they could respond with the proper amount of apparatus and crew.

Commissioner Jung said Bob Ackerman told how the TMFPD saved his wife's life by responding so quickly. She stated resources should be deployed based on the need of the general demographics of the area rather than trying to be all things to all people.

10:42 a.m. Commissioner Jung left the dais.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Commissioner Herman, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Commissioner Jung not on the dais, it was ordered that Agenda Item 11 be accepted.

19-057F **AGENDA ITEM 12** Discussion and possible direction to staff regarding whether to continue to use closed sessions for the Board to review and discuss with its management representatives labor negotiations and proposals made by the District and its two labor unions as allowed by law, or to conduct some or all of such discussions in open session. (All Commission Districts.)

10:45 a.m. Commissioner Jung returned to the dais.

Mr. Watts-Vial stated this item was to decide how the Board wanted to conduct closed sessions and handle information presented in those sessions. He said parties agreed to a series of ground rules when they started negotiations, one of which was a confidentiality clause. This clause required the parties to maintain their confidentiality while they negotiated, which prevented them from discussing any proposals or labor negotiations until the parties had reached a full tentative agreement. At that time, the tentative agreement would be presented to the Board. He stated the bargaining team would typically sign the rules; however a request to determine the process for labor negotiation sessions had been proposed to the Board.

Mr. Watts-Vial stated the intent was not for all negotiations to be held in a public forum. He said the Board could discuss, deliberate, and vote on a course of action if negotiations were held in an open session along with providing the opportunity for the public to attend meetings and provide input. He mentioned some states that followed the open negotiation process. There were arguments against the idea of discussing proposals in public because the County's bargaining strategy and negotiations would not be as confidential as they were in closed sessions. He stated there were pros and cons to both types of negotiation processes and noted members of the public would not participate in bargaining, but they would have the ability to provide input. He did not want to speak on behalf of the union but said the last position taken was they would prefer not to use ground rules at all if the confidentiality clause was removed. Regardless of whether there were ground rules, all bargaining was subject to the duties of good faith required in Chapter 288 along with other rules inherent in the nature of collective bargaining.

Commissioner Lucey said this was a discussion he had great interest in for quite some time. He stated the challenge was the public did not have the opportunity to provide input for issues discussed during closed sessions. He indicated 70 percent of the budget was related to salaries and benefits; therefore, 70 cents of every dollar paid by taxpayers was allocated by contract. He thought it was an important discussion between the District and its salaried members and the only people not present were the taxpayers whose dollars were being spent. There was a need for a more robust fire service in the north valleys. It would be beneficial for the County to have discussions about needs when there was a budget shortfall. He thought there should be a realistic understanding of how to move forward and wanted to have discussions in an open forum to enable the public to discuss the requests. He stated the Board was responsible to its constituents.

Chair Hartung agreed and said the County was spending the public's tax dollars because it was a public organization. He asked Mr. Watts-Vial whether the recommendation would be an all or nothing change. He wanted to understand how a modified version would work. Mr. Watts-Vial stated the staff report mentioned some or all discussions could occur in open session and the item was to get direction from the Board about the future of negotiation meetings. The Board could choose to do all meetings in a public forum or some discussions could be in closed session and some in public meetings.

Commissioner Jung stated she had concerns about negotiations taking place in a public forum. She wondered if all collective bargaining agreements would be treated the same. She stated she did not support this and said the Board should do what was best for everyone. She noted citizens did not vote on all the decisions the Board made as a whole. She did not wish to be like any of the states that participated in this type of process. She stated the County did a good job with negotiations. She did not believe a reduction in salaries or benefits would ever happen because nothing was produced at the County; they only provided services. She asked for a contract review board many times in the past and was not able to get one.

Commissioner Berkbigler expressed concern about this request being for fire services only and not all bargaining units; the County had not discussed a change in process. She stated she was not opposed to the change because she thought it was beneficial to firefighters to provide feedback regarding their benefits and compensation package. She thought it was important to remember the money was the people's money. She was unsure whether this item was ready for action at this time but she reminded the Board contracts and capital purchases went before the public already.

Commissioner Herman thought this item needed more groundwork before a final decision was made.

Chair Hartung appreciated that Mr. Watts-Vial looked at other states for best practices and he thought Nevada could learn from them.

11:02 a.m. Commissioner Herman left the meeting.

Mr. Watts-Vial stated there were specific statutes that dictated which types of items had to be advertised and bid on in public. He said some contracts were negotiated publicly and others were not. Labor contracts had their own statute, which allowed parties to negotiate confidentially. The contract would need to be posted three business days before a public body took a vote, along with any exhibits and changes to the contract. States such as Oregon and Washington also used this practice.

On the call for public comment, Mr. Ian Satterfield stated the public did get the chance to speak about negotiations and contracts with the current closed session process. It was mandated for the contract to be available for public review prior to a vote occurring. He said the public had the chance to provide public comment and voice their

opinions during a meeting where voting would occur on the collective bargaining. He thought it was a good system.

Mr. Watts-Vial said there were questions about what the County did versus what the District did. He indicated the Board met today as the Board of Fire Commissioners and said the District was separate than any other boards; this item only included the TMFPD.

Commissioner Berkbigler stated negotiations involving large numbers of people could create more issues and she wanted that to be a factor in this decision.

Commissioner Lucey said the decision was for the Board to be as transparent as possible and said not many people were present to provide feedback. He said three business days was not a long time for review and noted the issues had already been negotiated and were ready to be voted on at that point. He stated this would allow individuals to be privy to the negotiations and to hear what the requests were. It could hold County representatives accountable for any decision made related to negotiations of staff salaries and benefits. He thought there were benefits that could come out of the change but there could also be some challenges.

Commissioner Jung asked Mr. Watts-Vial whether the local union had to agree to changes to the process and if there was information in Section 288 of Nevada law. Mr. Watts-Vial believed ground rules allowed negotiations to proceed even if the parties were unable to come to an agreement. He stated nothing in Nevada Revised Statute 288.220 said the meeting had to be held confidentially. If the Board wanted to proceed with this option, it was within the law to do so.

On motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Commissioner Berkbigler, which motion duly carried on a 3-1 vote with Commissioner Herman absent and Commissioner Jung voting "no", it was ordered that staff be directed to move forward with a modified version for open negotiations and would rely on Chief Moore, Human Resources, and the District Attorney's Office to discuss what an open modified structure would be for future reference and discussion.

19-058F **AGENDA ITEM 13** Announcements/Reports.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore announced Mr. Ken McGuire passed away on February 14, 2019. He said Mr. McGuire was a volunteer member of the District and helped substantially with getting Gerlach volunteers up to speed. Mr. McGuire was also a longtime member of Washoe County Sheriff's Office and said he would be sadly missed.

Chair Hartung asked Chief Moore to bring back a Proclamation for Mr. McGuire.

19-059F AGENDA ITEM 14 Public Comment.

Ms. Elise Weatherly said she was frustrated and angry about the way the County was being run until hearing Chair Hartung mention there were budget issues, which changed her outlook. She mentioned Commissioners should not leave the dais before a vote to ensure each district was represented. She wanted to run for County Manager because she would ask people for suggestions. She spoke about the things she would do as the head of the County. She stated she did not receive a call back from the City of Reno about drug trafficking being ignored.

Ms. Tammy Holt-Still expressed frustration about the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District meeting running late. She wondered how the County could afford to install and maintain pumps around Swan Lake. She mentioned an area on Idaho Street was elevated two feet but water was about to breach over the 4-foot tall Hesco barriers. She said Lemmon Drive was closed because wind caused the electricity to short out, shutting down the pumps. She thought money was being wasted by not fixing the flooding issues. She thought the sewer plant in Lemmon Valley needed to be removed. She wondered why the County and the City of Reno could not work together.

* * * * *

11:19 a.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

VAUGHN HARTUNG, Chair
Truckee Meadows Fire
Protection District

ATTEST:

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

Minutes Prepared By:
Doni Gassaway, Deputy County Clerk