

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

TUESDAY

9:00 a.m.

NOVEMBER 19, 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
Nathan Edwards, 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:

19-166F AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

Mr. Cliff Low said he attended public meetings about the consolidation of two fire stations in Washoe Valley and stated many people he spoke with were unhappy with the prospect of having increased risk to their homes and lives due to increased response times. Residents got the impression the Board had already made up its mind about the consolidation and he hoped that was not the case. He believed the purpose of the deployment plan was to find a way to address long response times in certain parts of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) service area. He thought a proposal to consolidate the Washoe Valley stations was a means to an end and not the objective. He wondered whether the Commissioners only wanted one fire station in Washoe Valley and asked the Board to let him know if that was the case and he would not have much more public comment. Citing a document distributed at the September 17th meeting, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk, he indicated 72 percent of the north battalion calls were emergency medical services (EMS) calls. He indicated the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority was the EMS provider for Washoe County, responsible for all 911 EMS calls, and had the exclusive franchise agreement to provide all ambulance services except for Gerlach and North Lake Tahoe.

19-167F AGENDA ITEM 4 Announcements/Reports.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore wished Chair Hartung a happy birthday.

AGENDA ITEM #5A

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Vice Chair Lucey thanked Chief Moore and staff for the public discussions about consolidation of the stations in Washoe Valley. He thanked Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) President and CEO Dean Dow and Director of Clinical Communications Adam Heinz for attending the meetings. He stated staff described a clear understanding of the fire service challenges in the south valleys and the needs throughout the District. He did not believe a decision about the consolidation had been made, but he wanted to ensure the information presented was relevant and clear for people to understand. He attended a meeting at the Toiyabe Golf Club and where many questions and concerns were raised. He stated it was a challenge to have such a significant disparity in calls and service levels between the north and south battalions, yet the north had five stations and the south had six. The Commission tasked Chief Moore to find a balance with service levels and convey that information at the public meetings. He mentioned an offer was placed on the property that was being considered for a consolidated station, leaving that property unavailable. He stated the discussions were robust and he thought people were frustrated at first, but he thought staff did a wonderful job producing presentations. He said they would continue to work on a path forward.

Commissioner Jung said she recently visited Washoe Lake and Franktown Road. She wanted Chief Moore to present Geographic Information Systems (GIS) overlays of the risk in each area, and wondered if the burned areas were still at risk. She also wanted an overlay of REMSA's responsibility area and any areas where service levels should be increased. She said the TMFPD responded to many emergency medical services (EMS) calls because their response time was quicker than REMSA. She opined the Franktown Road area was at a higher risk than the remainder of Washoe Valley, noting one of the fire stations in that area had quick response times even though it was a very old station. She wanted the GIS overlays to be brought to the Board along with Chief Moore's subject matter expertise to analyze the data related to consolidating the two stations.

Commissioner Jung asked Chief Moore where the perfect location for each station would be if he could choose. She admitted the TMFPD responded to all EMS calls in Sun Valley and thought Washoe Valley could be considered over-served with two small stations. She said she was not necessarily against consolidation, but she was more worried about the people in Washoe Valley because they loved the fire stations. She commented that everyone wanted a fire station in their neighborhood because firefighters did more than just EMS and fire response; they provided social services. She stated she was nervous about how dry some wooded areas appeared. She indicated Vice Chair Lucey's district was a huge risk. She asserted REMSA needed to expand into Washoe Valley. She expressed appreciation to Chief Moore for protecting homes from fires.

CONSENT ITEMS – 5A through 5C

19-168F **5A** Recommendation to approve the meeting minutes from the October 15, 2019 Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting. (All Commission Districts.)

19-169F **5B** Recommendation to approve and accept a Sub-Grant Agreement between Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and Washoe County to participate in the Silver Crucible Complex Coordinated Terrorism Attack 9 Exercise retroactive from July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019 as part of the FFY 2017 State Homeland Security Program grant, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) #97.067, through the State of Nevada Division of Emergency Management, from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, passed through from Washoe County in the amount of \$6,507.86. If approved, authorize the Fire Chief or his designee to sign the grant award documents; and to make the necessary budget amendments. The funding is intended to support staff time for TMFPD as well as the use of TMFPD vehicles and equipment in the training exercises. The objective of the training exercise is to engage emergency management, law enforcement, fire, Emergency Medical Services, hospitals, the private sector, and volunteer agencies in multiple locations. The exercise will test the ability to detect, respond, communicate, and recover from a complex coordinated terrorism attack. The end result will be lessons learned, corrective actions to improve public safety, and updated plans. (All Commission Districts.)

19-170F **5C** Recommendation to approve a retroactive 3 year contract with Sierra County, California in an amount of \$48,000 per year to provide fire suppression and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) in certain areas as outlined in the attached map; if approved the contract will be effective July 1, 2019 expiring on June 30, 2022, with an automatic renewal provision for an additional three years unless either entity opts out. This agreement is intended to reimburse or cover the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) for the costs it incurs in providing fire services to communities in Sierra County, California, in the area of Verdi and Long Valley. It does not require paramedic transport by TMFPD. (Commission District 5.)

Chair Hartung indicated Consent Agenda Item 5E would be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion.

Chair Hartung asked about the new fee related to Consent Agenda Item 5C and wondered whether taxpayers in outlying areas paid more than they would if they lived in California. Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore stated taxpayers in California paid slightly more.

Chief Moore announced Agenda Item 5D was pulled from the agenda and would be heard at the next meeting.

There was no public comment on the Consent Agenda Items listed above.

On motion by Vice Chair Lucey, seconded by Commissioner Berkbigher, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 5A through 5C be approved.

19-171F **5E** Recommendation to approve a contract for services for mental health & wellness services for TMFPD employees and immediate family, through Steve Nicholas, MFT at a cost of \$15,000 for the period of January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 and authorize the Fire Chief to execute the service agreement. This agreement will further enhance the District's offerings of services to its staff by making a licensed therapist routinely available to all personnel and will include regular training sessions related to stress and suicide prevention, routine station visits and personal contacts between the therapist and staff members, support and diffusing for peer support team members, and pre-employment screening and trainings amongst other services. (All Commission Districts.)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore said this item was a recommendation to approve a contract for mental health and wellness services. The District worked hard to improve the resources for employees to cope with stress levels and mental wellbeing. He said Deputy Chief Alex Kukulus would provide additional information about the services.

Deputy Chief Kukulus thought it was important to bring in an expert for peer support. He expressed appreciation to Captain Derek Reid for his work getting the peer support program started. He stated additional trainings and classes happened since the loss of Firefighter Tyler Ewald. A chaplain program was recently established and he said there were now three chaplains. He noted the peer support program had been adopted in departments across the State of Nevada and the TMFPD was sharing resources with other agencies.

Dr. Steve Nicolas stated he worked with first responders and wildland firefighters through the Bureau of Land Management and said Captain Derek Reid attended a Suicide Prevention class he taught. He noted Captain Reid approached him after Firefighter Ewald passed away and said they started brainstorming ways to better address the mental wellness, health, and resiliency of first responders. The predominant models for these issues emphasized critical incident stress management, which was still fundamental in first response, using the tools they already had. He indicated they were working with trauma-exposed professionals in addition to day-to-day experiences. He said he and Captain Reid had put together a peer support program that was impacting the northern Nevada peer support network. One of the issues they focused on was normalizing conversations related to mental health. He noted he would frequent local fire stations to be part of the culture within the TMFPD so overlapping trauma exposure would not be a taboo topic when it started to get too severe. He hoped the TMFPD would become a model for many other agencies by destigmatizing the concept of mental health and wellness related to self-harm and suicide.

Commissioner Jung wondered who else utilized this program locally. Dr. Nicolas stated no one was doing this locally. Commissioner Jung said this was a national conversation and this situation was happening more and more across the profession. She asserted it was a cultural belief that mental illness was a weakness for first responders and many expressed fears of losing their jobs. She wanted to see Dr. Nicolas publish his work because it was such an important topic. She thought firefighters were the most neglected of all first responders in dealing with trauma. She indicated no one could predict what would put someone over the edge and every first responder needed help with stress. She was proud of what the TMFPD had done with this program and thought every first responder, including animal control, the Sheriff's Office, and dispatchers, needed this information. She praised Dr. Nicolas for the work he did and said she would do anything to help.

Chair Hartung said the Sparks Police Department recently lost an officer and he hoped this peer support program could become regional.

Dr. Nicolas said this cultural shift was long overdue, but still well ahead of its time. The challenge was to get first responders to talk about pain because most people considered it a sign of weakness. The TMFPD was the only department in Nevada to start this needed effort. He indicated there was resistance with these programs but the TMFPD had the right idea. He noted the program and its progress would be reevaluated on a continual basis. Chair Hartung asserted step one was admitting a problem. He thanked Dr. Nicolas for the work he had done and suggested reaching out to other agencies and departments.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Vice Chair Lucey, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5E be approved.

19-172F AGENDA ITEM 6 Fire Chief Report:

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

1. Administration/Logistics/Fleet facility Needs
2. Ladder Truck Acquisition Update
3. Community Meetings to Discuss Proposed Fire Station Consolidation of Station 30, located at 3905 Old Highway 395 and Station 32, located at 1240 East Lake Blvd.
4. Status Update on Green Waste Collection Days & "Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful" Christmas Tree Recycling Program.
5. Status of Open Burning

B. Commissioner DashBoard

C. Review of Response Statistics for September 2019 to include Mutual and Auto Aid for our regional partners.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore said the District occupied office space at the County Administration Complex and previously used the armory building for logistics. He noted they leased a warehouse in Sparks for vehicle maintenance and logistics, but they were extremely cramped in that space. He stated he was researching alternatives to consolidate administrative functions, fleet maintenance, and logistics in one building. He said consolidation would mean moving from the Administrative Complex to another building with enough space to facilitate the entire operation. He thought the County could use the space that District staff currently used. He noted he would bring feasible options back to the Board for discussion and direction.

Chair Hartung hoped the tenant improvements would not be significant when leasing a building. Chief Moore said the intent was to make this as cost neutral as possible. He thought they paid the County \$160,000 for the current space and the Sparks location cost \$100,000, and there was also an opportunity to consolidate training space. He believed the cost would be close to the current expense.

Commissioner Jung said she supported a consolidated building for the TMFPD. She thought it would be good for morale to have staff together in one building and it would increase peer support. She wanted Chief Moore to compare the costs of leasing a building and improving it to accommodate staff with the cost of building a new facility. She asked Chief Moore to start preparation for annexation issues because that was a loss of tax revenue; she said he needed to be ready for the next legislative session. She stated annexation had plagued the community for years and she was concerned about budgeting around it. She expressed frustration about cities being able to annex property and take the fire services money but not upgrade their fire service. Eventually, she felt the city would claim they needed automatic aid because they could not afford fire services after annexation of an area. She wanted Chief Moore to invite Chief Mike Brown to a meeting to discuss the subject.

Commissioner Herman asked about the amount of square footage Chief Moore thought he would need for a new location. Chief Moore stated they had 10,000 square feet at Greg Street and less than 3,000 at the Administration Complex, but they would need at least double, if not triple, the amount of square footage.

Chief Moore stated the ladder truck they acquired was en route and would stop in Las Vegas to be painted and have some minor repairs performed. He expressed excitement about adding the apparatus to the fleet. He noted the work would take about a month to complete and he expected the truck to be in service at the beginning of the year. Chair Hartung asked whether the ladder truck was a tiller. Chief Moore confirmed it was a quint, not a tiller, which had five functions but only required one driver. He said it was a tower ladder truck with a bucket on the end of the ladder.

Chief Moore indicated meetings had occurred related to the possible consolidation of stations in Washoe Valley. He intended to bring options and financial analysis to the Board in December or January for discussion and direction.

Chief Moore admitted the TMFPD had become a victim of its own success with the green waste program. He said they collected more than 4,500 cubic yards of material at the Silver Lake and Eastlake stations, which was equal to about 100 acres of space. He stated the collection took place over two subsequent weekends and generated more waste than anticipated. He conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk, and reviewed slides with the following titles: 2019 Fall Green Waste Update; Green Waste Volume; and Silver Lake Station #430. He said this program encouraged people to develop defensible space around their homes and reduce fire risk. He indicated staff would burn the pile of waste once weather conditions improved. He was pleased residents were taking advantage of the green waste program.

Chair Hartung expressed disappointment about not having a green waste site in Spanish Springs. Chief Moore said he would like to have more sites but stated it took a large lot to store the waste. Chair Hartung thought they could work with a local composter in Spanish Springs to attempt to provide more locations.

Commissioner Jung thought the Nextdoor application could be used to advertise free mulch to residents. She stated activated waste was harder to obtain and residents could pick up what they needed. She suggested charging a nominal disposal fee to cover trucking fees the next time. She thought this could educate people and get them in the habit of clearing green waste the same time every year.

Chief Moore said the status of open burning was still closed because it was still too dry and dangerous. He stated they would continue to inform residents about the danger of open burning.

Chief Moore indicated the response status was included in the staff report and there was no need for discussion.

On the call for public comment, Mr. Cliff Low thanked Chief Moore and Deputy Chief Alex Kukulus for their participation in the four public meetings held about consolidating the two fire stations in Washoe Valley. He opined more people would have attended the meetings had the postcard sent to residents been worded differently. He thought the wording was incorrect by stating the proposed change would increase staff and resources, but he asserted the change would reduce services. He said that it was stated at the last public meeting that REMSA would locate an ambulance at a new public safety center in Washoe Valley. He believed the purpose of considering Washoe Valley was to relocate TMFPD staff to Sun Valley where many medical calls originated. He opined that if the ambulance to be stationed in Washoe Valley was coming from the Mt. Rose/Wedge Parkway area as stated in the last public meeting, those residents would be upset. Since the issue was medical calls, he suggested placing the REMSA unit in Sun Valley, whether it was a new unit or the unit from Wedge Parkway, in order to keep two fire stations in Washoe Valley. He provided a document, which was placed on file with the Clerk.

19-173F **AGENDA ITEM 7** Recommendation to approve a change order to the Agreement for Professional Services with Paul Cavin Architect, LLC, increasing the existing contract amount owed by Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District by \$42,900 for a total contract amount of \$138,050 for the Fire Station 37 replacement Project in Hidden Valley; The scope to the contract change proposal is to provide programming and conceptual design services for the proposed apparatus bay as well as additional engineering design scope for the proposed boundary line adjustment to the existing fire station whereas the original scope only included the design efforts for the residence. Station 37 is located at 3255 W. Hidden Valley Drive, Reno, NV 89502. (Commission District 2.)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore stated this item was for the design of the new truck bay at Station 37 in Hidden Valley. He said the truck bay would be raised and the modular structure would be removed as soon as the boundary line adjustment was approved by the Reno City Council. Hopefully they would break ground in the spring. He noted the crew quarters had already been designed.

On the call for public comment, Mr. Thomas Daly stated this project could not move ahead until the Reno City Council agreed to a minor boundary line adjustment. He said nine City Council meetings occurred since June but the item had not yet been placed on an agenda. He suggested the Chair call the Mayor to get the issue moving.

On motion by Commissioner Berkbighler, seconded by Vice Chair Lucey, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 7 be approved.

19-174F **AGENDA ITEM 8** Recommendation to approve a Health Benefits Program for District employees, dependents and retirees 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. (All Commission Districts.)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Chief Charles Moore said the union had ratified this proposal. He noted the recommendation was to move to Prominence Health Care and said employees would receive a lower monthly premium. Retirees who opted into the high deductible plan would receive \$1,700 per year and employees would receive a health saving account benefit. He stated the cost increase would only be 1.8 percent compared to a proposed 12 percent increase. He thought it was a good deal for all participants.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Berkbighler, seconded by Vice Chair Lucey, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 8 be approved and authorized.

19-175F AGENDA ITEM 9 Announcements/Reports.

Commissioner Jung said fire service did not utilize traditional mathematics; a consolidated station with four people allowed for two in and two out by Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards and the standards that firefighters adhered to because it was a better practice. She noted four people located at a consolidated station would increase protection.

19-176F AGENDA ITEM 10 Public Comment.

Mr. Cliff Low said he assumed the Commissioners had not made up their minds and that the objective was not to reduce services in Washoe Valley. He stated 70 percent of the calls in Washoe Valley were for emergency medical services (EMS) and those calls were the responsibility of the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA). He expressed appreciation that each Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) unit had a paramedic onboard, which made sense in outlying areas, but he thought it was wrong to expect the TMFPD to respond to all EMS calls. He stated a verbal commitment was made by REMSA to stage an ambulance in Washoe Valley. He asked about the reasoning behind reducing services in Washoe Valley considering it was divided by a lake and largely had with no municipal water supply. He wanted REMSA to deploy units to the north valleys and Sun Valley to relieve the TMFPD of heavy call volume and allow them to keep the two Washoe Valley fire stations.

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9:59 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