

**TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

September 22, 2010

Regular Meeting

Those Present:

Trustee Steve Seibel	Captain Tim Allison
Trustee Frank Forvilly	Captain Kirk Thompson
Trustee Brad Dorton	Zephyr Crew Supervisor Keegan Schafer
Trustee R.J. Clason	Carrie Nolting, Administrative Aid
Chairperson Roy Clason	
Chief Guy LeFever	Kate Warner, Administrative Assistant
Assistant Chief Mark Novak	Bob Cook, Guest
Assistant Chief Van Ogami	Ann Grant, Guest
Battalion Chief Ben Sharit	
Battalion Chief Hekhuis	
Inspector Leo Horton	
Inspector Eric Guevin	

1. Action Item: Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairman Roy Clason.

2. Action Item: Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of allegiance was led by Guest Bob Cook.

3. Action Item: Roll call.

Chairman Roy Clason, Trustee Steve Seibel, Trustee Frank Forvilly, Trustee R.J. Clason and Trustee Brad Dorton were present.

4. Action Item: Public comment.

No public comment.

5. Action Item: Discussion and possible action. Approval of consent calendar.

Item:

- a. Approval of agenda.
- b. Approval of Minutes 8/18/2010.

- c. Approval of Job Descriptions Fire Captain, Engineer, Firefighter/Paramedic.

Trustee Seibel moved to approve the consent calendar items. Trustee Clason seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

Action Item #6: Consent Items moved forward.

There were none.

**Presentation #7: Employee Recognition- Alarm Response, May 28, 2010 Zephyr Cove tennis courts.
Battalion Chief Ben Sharit**

Chief Sharit introduced Steve and Gracie Cornell, local residents. Steve was playing tennis and suffered full cardiac arrest, and due to the combined efforts of his fellow tennis players, and several local agencies – Steve was present today, and fully recovered from the emergency.

On May 28, the Station 4 crew was at the beach conducting a Water Safety Program with school kids, B/C Hekhuis was at the station working on his day off when the door bell rang at the same time the emergency tones went off. Due to cell phone issues on Warrior Way, Steve's friends were having difficulty placing the 9-1-1 call, so someone ran to the fire station.

USFS Engine 44 crew members Jenny Alustiza and Taylor Chambers, who have been living at Station 4, responded with B/C Hekhuis. Douglas Co. Deputy Sheriffs Rick Kuntz, Jr. and Kevin Schaller, also responded and began CPR immediately. FF/P Brad Petersen, ENG Brandon Brady and Captain Kirk Thompson arrived on the scene to take over patient care and transport. A/C Novak, FF/P Kevin Green and FF/P Jesse Rowan also responded.

Chief Sharit acknowledged USFS Fire Chief Bailey, B/C Steve Burns and thanked the members of Engine Company 44 for their support all summer from Station 4, Captain Simons and his crews have provided much appreciated back up on medical calls and auto accidents.

Chief Sharit noted that in his 30 years of service, it is rare that a patient has a full and complete recovery under such circumstances. He wanted the Board to acknowledge the first responders and to celebrate how a community helped save the life of Steve Cornell.

Trustee Forvilly acknowledged the first responders and the need for better cell phone coverage in that area of the District.

Sheriff Pierini acknowledged his officers, said they would be honored at the Sheriff's Department annual event, and that Deputy Kuntz will be making Douglas County Sheriff's Department history for the second time he has saved a life.

Deputy Sheriff Schaller expanded on the comments, stating that circumstances are amazing. He and Deputy Kuntz were doing extra duty that day for a cross-country Wounded Warriors bike ride that just happened to be going thru Zephyr Cove when the call came in. They were posted at the end of Warrior Way and Hwy 50 watching the Disabled Veterans ride by. Normally there are only 2 officers on duty from Spooner to the casino core, so they would have never been that close to respond so quickly.

Board recessed at 4:10pm for photos with the Tahoe Tribune.

Board meeting resumed at 4:30pm

Chief LeFever introduced new recruits Jenny Alustiza, formerly with the USFS; Timothy Egan formerly with the Sparks Fire Department; and Andrew Isenberg, formerly with Storey County Fire District; all experienced Firefighter/Paramedics. Recruits are in Orientation this week and will begin a 5 week academy on September 27, 2010.

**Presentation #8: *Fire Recovery U.S.A.*
Chris Valenzuela, Cost Recovery Consultant**

This company provides a third party billing service to recover fire district expenses for at fault non-resident auto accidents, HAZMAT, gas line breaks, power lines downs, water and back country rescues and replacement of equipment damaged on calls like hoses, “Jaws of Life”, and turnouts etc. The company was founded by retired firefighters who had experienced budget cuts and identified a need to recoup costs incurred by the fire departments for non-resident calls.

The service only requires three bits of information at the call which are currently being captured anyway – driver’s license, vehicle and insurance information and they provide a full on- line accounting software system for processing.

Fire Recovery, U.S.A. recently added South Lake Tahoe, North Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley Fire Districts to their client list of 172 agencies nationwide.

Frequently asked Questions he elaborated on:

Q. Is this double taxation? No, non-residents are not paying taxes here, locals are.

Q. Will this raise someone rates with this additional billing? No, the insurance companies have set this money aside from premiums. Rates are established on risk and liability; how many accidents and speeding tickets have you had and your type of coverage.

B/C Hekhuis asked if utility companies could be billed as well? Valenzuela confirmed yes that North Tahoe is currently submitting about a claim a week to Arizona Pipeline who is installing a new line.

Chairman Clason asked if their clients had received any push back from residents on the program, Lake Tahoe is a tourist destination and he was concerned about the reaction. Valenzuela responded that it needs to be communicated to the public that this preserves the Fire District's assets. Tourists involved in accidents are already billing their insurance for repairs on the vehicles involved. The rates are fair, usual and customary with the standard rate for vehicle response being \$400.00. Fire Recovery uses national averages to set fees.

Trustee Clason asked for clarification on figures listed in the promotional material.

Valenzuela elaborated on the billing levels:

- Level 1 Vehicle \$400-435
- Level 2 Vehicle with oil, radiator fluid clean up \$495
- Level 3 Vehicle fire clean up \$605
- Level 4 Vehicle "Jaws of Life", vehicle stabilization and clean up \$1800
- Level 5 Level 4, plus a Helicopter \$2200

Trustee Clason asked about minimal damage situations, would they be billed as well? What if we are notifying the driver's insurance and the driver does not intend to file a claim? Drivers with high deductibles may choose to pay out of pocket for repairs as not to have their insurance rates go up. Valenzuela said this decision would be evaluated by the Captain on the call, if there was no real reason for the District to be there, and then of course there would be no billing. This policy would be established and trained with personnel. There is no intent to gouge the public; this is true cost recovery effort.

Trustee Clason inquired as to whether Fire Recovery had ever lost a client and if so what was the reason. Valenzuela answered that they have never lost an account and in fact have grown their business on the unhappy customers of their competitors.

He questioned the client list and felt that they did not have a lot of large departments. Valenzuela responded that they serve several Class 1 Districts including Stockton, Roseville, San Bernardino, and Oakland.

Trustee Seibel asked how long the company has been in business? Valenzuela stated that they are in their 4th year of operation.

Trustee Dorton asked who determines if billing will happen? Valenzuela stated that most accounts are set up for the Battalion Chiefs to have final review of the calls.

Trustee Dorton inquired as to the insurance codes needed to bill properly and get paid? Valenzuela said that is part of the training and set up, these codes already exist and are part of the insurance policies. He also added that his company had an 80% collection rate, and that by law, they cannot make a profit.

Chief LeFever is a member of the International Fire Chief's Association which will qualify TDFPD for the lower rate of 20% of the collections to Fire Recovery, U.S.A. Normal rates are 25%.

Fire Marshall Novak asked what happens with the 20% of the claims that are deemed uncollectible? Are those accounts sent to a collection agency? Valenzuela said that they do not send any accounts to collections; typically if they cannot collect it is because their insurance was not valid at the time of the accident, or policy coverage money ran out before all claims were covered.

Action Item #9: *Refurbish Ambulance Proposal*
Battalion Chief David Hekhuis

B/C Hekhuis updated the Board on the Second Phase of the Ambulance Re-chassis Project budgeted for and scheduled in F/Y 2011. The first phase of the project was completed in June 2010 with very good results, and only minor tweaking needed. He estimates the cost at \$97,300 for ambulance #2, but each vehicle is unique requiring special customization, so the budget amount is \$105,000 which will cover any unforeseen expenses.

B/C Hekhuis noted that this purchase is different from our Type 1 engine in that the vendor does not require payment in advance, so risk is limited. A Performance Bond option is available at 1% of the invoice if the Board feels that is necessary. Contract is for 100% payment upon delivery.

Trustee Clason moved that the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District approve the expenditure not to exceed \$105,000 for the chassis replacement and patient compartment refurbishment of ambulance # M0203, by Braun Northwest, Inc. in accordance with the specification approved by both parties, with payment of 100% of the invoice price upon acceptance of the vehicle by TDFPD. Trustee Seibel seconded the motion. No further discussion, motion was carried with a 5-0 vote.

Action Item #10: *Jet Ski Purchase Proposal*
Assistant Chief Van Ogami

Chief Ogami reviewed the history of the American Honda Motor Company's Public Service Department program which started supplying jet skis to Law, Fire, State Fish/Game and other agencies to assist in their services. TDFPD was awarded our first two in 2006; they were replaced at no charge in 2008 and were scheduled to be rotated out every two years.

Honda recently contacted Chief Ogami and informed him that due to budget cuts, the program has been discontinued and TDFPD now has the following options:

1. Purchase the Honda Aquatrax PWCs at a price of \$7500 for both. Based on Blue Book research, this price is \$3500-\$4000 below market value. Continue to provide the water rescue support.
2. Deliver the jet skis back to American Honda. Continue to provide water rescue with only Marine 4 (boat).
3. Purchase replacements @ approximately \$7500 - \$10,000 each to continue to provide the water rescue support.

Chief Ogami also noted that the jet skis have been well maintained, and the District's only expense had been for the trailer and logos. He clarified the intended use of the jet skis is to work in concert with Marine 4, to utilize the speed at which the Hondas can respond under a variety of weather and water conditions. The Hondas have the ability to search and make 1st contact with victims and to stabilize the emergency until Marine 4 or other support vehicles can arrive on scene and transport.

Chairman Clason inquired as to the long range plans for Marine 4? A/C Ogami responded that the mechanic and personnel feel that the boat is in good condition and can serve for another 10 years. Marine 4 was purchased new 11 years ago for \$37,000; replacement costs quoted three years ago for the vessel were approximately \$117,000. Marine 4 is especially valuable to our District residents in the off-seasons when other agencies have removed their vessels from the water. Marine 4 & personnel are available year-round 24/7.

In addition to water rescue, these vehicles support local events and public education programs. A/C Ogami added that we had been told that jet skis could not provide HAZMAT support, however they have proven to be capable of proficiently handling booms and containment issues on a training drill with the M.S. Dixie.

Chairperson Clason inquired as to the estimated life expectancy of the jet skis? A/C Ogami clarified that at 2 years old with less than 8 hours on them; he projects them to last for many years. There have not been any service issues to date.

Trustee Forvilly made a motion that the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District approve the expenditure not to exceed \$7500 for the purchase of two (2) 2007 Honda Aquatrax PWCs from American Honda Motor Company already in possession of the District. Trustee Dorton seconded the motion. Motion approved with a 5-0 vote.

Action Item #11: Review of monthly expenditures.

Chief LeFever presented explanations for the major expenditures

Innovative Networks	Software Upgrade	\$1062.00
Additional software (Adobe and QuickBooks) packages were needed for new staff.		

Trustee Clason commented as to the expense related to the EOD training in Israel for two TDFPD employees. Chief LeFever clarified that the expense was budget neutral. The District is required annually to provide 40 hours of training, and it is grant funded up to that 40 hours. Chief LeFever drew attention to A/C Ogami's report noting EOD will receive \$560,000 in grant funding through Homeland Security. All of the four certified Bomb Squads in the state can apply for the grant money. Level 1 certification is required by the FBI standards.

Chairperson Clason inquired as to any opportunity for more grant funds in the future? B/C Hekhuis noted that TDFPD has benefitted greatly from these programs and has been able to replace our EOD truck, donating our old vehicle to Search and Rescue; purchased the Robot and now funds are available for a new containment vehicle. TDFPD's needs are currently met.

Attachments:

- Operations Report – A/C Ogami
- Fuels Management Report – A/C Novak

Chairperson Clason commented on A/C Novak's report and the training opportunity with the Redding Hot Shot Leadership program. He clarified that there would be a selection process and some commitment made from the chosen candidate to continue to serve this District in return for the educational investment.

Action Item #13: *Confirm next meeting, October 20, 2010, @ 4:00 pm, possible agenda items.*

Trustee Dorton voiced conflicts with the 20th and the last 2 weeks of the month; Trustee Dorton moved that the meeting be slated for Wednesday, October 13 @ 4 pm. Trustee Clason seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

Board Meeting dates were clarified for the remainder of the calendar year as:

- 2nd Wednesday, October 13
- 3rd Wednesday, November 17
- 3rd Wednesday, December 15

Trustee Clason drew attention to the Fire Chief's Performance Review packets which were provided to each Board member, and asked that they be returned to him, Trustee Dorton or Kate Warner by October 1.

Trustee Forvilly asked if Chief LeFever needed any action from the Board today on the presentation by Fire Recovery, U.S.A.? Chief LeFever declined, stating that the next step in the process was for the staff to do their due diligence. Chairperson Clason requested that we contact our counterparts at other Districts for feedback.

Trustee Forvilly asked if there were other recovery companies. Yes, Fire Recovery U. S. A. is in the top 3. B/C Sharit spoke to his counterpart at Stockton Fire, and he spoke highly of this company, and said it was a great process and he will be providing more in depth information. Chief LeFever offered a staff recommendation in the future with implementation tentatively on January 1, 2011, if approved.

Action Item #12: Adjourn.

A motion was made by Trustee Seibel to adjourn. Motion seconded by Trustee Clason. The motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

This meeting was recorded on audio tape.

Kate Warner
Administrative Assistant
Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District