

TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PREVENTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
February 25, 2015

Those Present:

Chairman Larry Schussel
Vice Chairman Greg Felton
Trustee Bill Kirschner
Trustee Kevin Kjer
Trustee Steve Seibel
Fire Chief Ben Sharit
Legal Counsel Mike McCormick
Assistant Chief Tim Allison

Battalion Chief Rich Nalder
Fire Marshal Eric Guevin
Fire Inspector Todd Stroup
Foreman Matt Fogarty
Engineer Andy Isenberg
Forester John Pickett
Office Manager Kate Warner
Accounting Specialist Carrie Nolting
Administrative Assistant Casey O'Neill
Guest Speaker Mike Friend, Officer NDF

1. Call to Order.

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of allegiance was led by Ski Patrol Director Arthur.

3. Roll Call.

Chairman Schussel, Vice Chairman Felton, Trustee Kirschner, Trustee Kjer and Trustee Seibel were present. A quorum was present.

4. Approval of Agenda.

Vice Chairman Felton motioned to approve the agenda. Trustee Kjer seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

5. Public Comment.

None.

**6. Presentation. Employee Recognition - Field Save
Heavenly Ski Patrol
Chief Tim Allison**

On January 18th, 2015 there was an emergency call at Heavenly Ski Resort for a 55 year old male who went into cardiac arrest standing in line for the chairlift. The patient's girlfriend immediately started CPR and shortly after, one of the Heavenly employees grabbed the AED and shocked the patient twice. The patient was revived after the second shock; sledged to the base lodge by Ski Patrol and then transported by TDFPD paramedics to a landing zone to be flown out to Renown Hospital. The patient fully recovered at the hospital and is doing very well now. Chief Allison recognized the Engine Company who responded to the call, Firefighter/Paramedic Nick Robidart and Justin Reddig, Captain Chuck Salerno and Engineer Steve Prather. Furthermore, he recognized Heavenly Ski Resort employees Ski Patroller Gray Grandy, Mountain Safety Lead Mike Orr and Lift Operator Supervisor Alan Payne. Grandy started CPR on the patient and activated the resort's outdoor Code Blue protocols, Orr assisted with the CPR and Payne grabbed the AED from inside the East Peak Lodge and applied the pads. Chief Allison congratulated each employee for their life saving efforts on this day.

Chief Sharit added that he has been working as a paramedic for almost 35 years now, and recalled a time when there were never any AED's found on the mountain. Over the years, TDFPD worked with Heavenly Valley to put AED's on the mountain. Chief Sharit recognized and thanked each employee for their heroic actions and service to the community.

**Employee Recognition - Fuels Facility Purchase Team
Fire Chief Ben Sharit**

Over the past two years, the fire district has been searching for a permanent home for the Zephyr Fire Crew. It has been a difficult process finding a commercial property in Lake Tahoe with the ability to house thirty firefighters, their vehicles and equipment. The first fuels' "facility" was a construction trailer located in a dirt parking lot off of Logging Lane. This ended up being a four year home for the crew before they moved into their current building on Kingsbury Grade. Chief Sharit recognized Retired Chief Guy Lefever, Retired Assistant Chief Mark Novak, Retired Chief Jim Hardison, Retired Fire Inspector Leo Horton, Forester John Pickett and Chief Rich Nalder for their hard work on this project.

Forester Pickett was the primary force who drove this two year real estate endeavor. Chief Sharit recognized Chief Nalder and Retired Chief Hardison for their hard work on the facilities part of the building; the TDFPD Board (past and present) and other outside agencies. There will be an open house scheduled for all to view the property at a later date.

Employee Recognition - Hard Rock Opening

Fire Chief Ben Sharit

Chief Sharit recognized the TDFPD Fire Prevention staff, Fire Marshal Eric Guevin and Fire Inspector Todd Stroup and their endeavors to help the Hard Rock Casino open on schedule. In addition to life safety, one of the fire district's goals is to support our businesses and tax payers. Their assistance with the entire process leading to the casino hosting a successful grand opening is a perfect example of this goal.

7. Approval of the Consent Calendar.

Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes 1/21/15
- b. Monthly Expenditures
- c. Financials 10/31/14, 11/30/14 and 12/31/14

Trustee Seibel motioned to approve the Consent Calendar items. Trustee Kirschner seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

8. For Possible Action: Consent items moved forward.

None.

9. For Possible Action: Interlocal Contract Between the State of Nevada Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources NDF and TDFPD. NDF Fire Management Officer Mike Friend

Friend introduced himself as the Nevada Division of Forestry's Western Area Fire Management Officer and fielded questions on the Wildfire Protection Plan prior to a slideshow.

Vice Chairman Felton asked for Friend to highlight any specific changes to the plan.

Friend explained that they changed the policy for TDFPD by adding verbiage for prescribed fire. TDFPD, NLTFPD and NDF will review each other's burn plans before initiating any fire on the ground. If an agency is following their burn plan and for whatever reason the fire goes out of prescription, the State of Nevada will still cover those costs.

Friend emphasized that the purpose of the Wildfire Protection Program is for the State of Nevada to provide financial assistance for the suppression of wild land fire occurring in Nevada, ranging from small to catastrophic fires. The Federal Management Assistant Grants only cover up to 80% of the cost of fire and the WFPP will pick up the remaining cost for your agency and community. In essence, the program is a good neighbor policy with the State of Nevada being able to help out its citizens.

Friend then reviewed NDF's helicopter program, another significant part of the WFPP. He assured that the money they receive from the account is applied directly to personnel and equipment costs. Currently, NDF has three full time pilots for three helicopters and is in the process of requesting a fourth pilot, so that they can have coverage on two of their helicopters for seven days a week. WFPP provides these helicopters to help cover any fire incidents in our district and also with our neighbors at NLTFPD. The air base is in Minden and helicopters can be on the mountain within five minutes flight time. They also plan to cover local areas by having the helicopters staged on Red Flag Warning days or special events, such as July 4th weekend.

Vice Chairman Felton asked if NDF uses the Smokey the Bear balloon as a resource. Friend said the balloon is owned by the Forest Service, but NDF partners with them and other agencies to utilize it at prevention events, particularly for the younger clientele. The actual balloon travels around nationwide.

Trustee Kirschner motioned to approve the action. Trustee Seibel seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

Interlocal Contract between the State of Nevada Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources NDF and TDFPD was signed by Fire Chief Sharit, Chairman Schussel and Legal Counsel McCormick.

10. For Possible Action: Discussion of Board Driven Goals for FY 2015-16 Budget.
Trustee Seibel and Trustee Kirschner

Trustee Seibel stated that he and Trustee Kirschner agreed on six board driven objectives, four of which carry over from previous years:

1. Continue work with the Health Insurance Committee and monitor changes from the Affordable Care Act that may impact employee benefits.
2. Continue current public education and community outreach programs in regards to the WUI (Wild land Urban Interface) enforcement program.
3. Continue staff directive to develop short/medium options for modification of the current service delivery plan based on flat revenue projections.
4. Succession planning for Chief Officers.
5. Establish a research team to review possible alternatives for future retiree health benefits that will secure TDFPD's financial stability in the future.

6. Review public touch points that will help the fire district reach out to the community, and educate them on what the fire district does for them and what resources are available.

Vice Chairman Felton added that when we have public interactions, it is important to let them know what we can do for them and vice versa. As a board member, he has learned a lot about the value that the fire district brings to the community that it is not always advertised. Generally, people are unaware of what is offered. He would like the district to be able to market their services better.

Trustee Kjer suggested returning to sending out mailings to the community every so often.

Chief Sharit added that TDFPD will be introducing a new website with updates and the ability to interact more with the public. Also, the district will be sending staff for training on different social media outlets, as another source to notify the public about emergency events and the services we provide.

Trustee Kirschner asked when the new website will be up and running.

Office Manager Warner said it should be ready by the end of next week (3/13/15). She added that our new website will have a newsletter feature. The challenge will be capturing people to sign up for this component. Once they sign up, they will receive a notice stating when the Tahoe Douglas website was updated and will direct them to the new information. This will be more cost effective than sending out paper newsletters, although there may be a portion of the market that is missed, those who are not internet savvy.

Vice Chairman Felton asked if there is a way to connect this with the defensible space inspection program. He wondered if the defensible space staff can go to the residents with this information since they are already visiting a lot of these homes for inspections each year.

Chief Sharit said that this is all in the process. The information will be updated on the website and staff will work on utilizing other outlets, such as social media, to get information out to the public. Our Public Information Officer, Eric Guevin, has already been doing outreach with TV and radio appearances. He understands that we must reach out to our residents utilizing many different communication mediums.

Vice Chairman Felton motioned to adopt the board driven goals as submitted. Trustee Kjer seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

11. For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action to direct the Fire Chief to apply for a FEMA SAFER grant for the retention of the current SAFER positions.

Fire Chief Ben Sharit

The SAFER FEMA 2014 retention grant application process is currently open and formal direction is needed from the board to apply. The application process ends March 6th, 2015 an anticipated award date in September 2015.

Vice Chairman Felton asked if the board would leave the requested level of funding to the Fire Chief's discretion.

Chief Sharit answered yes.

Trustee Seibel motioned to approve the action. Trustee Kirschner seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

12. For Possible Action: Discussion on authorizing the Board of Trustees to sign a letter of commitment for the 2014 FEMA SAFER grant application.

Fire Chief Ben Sharit

This letter is part of the FEMA application process for the 2014 SAFER grant. It shows the board's intention to continue employment for all SAFER firefighters after the grant expires.

Trustee Kjer motioned to approve the action. Trustee Seibel seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

13. Report Item: Review of Monthly Fire District Activities.

Fire Chief Ben Sharit

Employees Years of Service

Office Manager Kate Warner	5 Years of Service
Foreman Matt Fogarty	1 Year of Service

Updates:

Zephyr Crew Paramedic Scholarship - Zephyr Crew member Michael Bartlett started his paramedic school program this week.

Fire Inspector Todd Stroup appointed as the Adjunct Instructor at LTCC - Chief Sharit has been an instructor at LTCC for about 16 years and is now appointing Fire Inspector Stroup as his replacement to teach the Fire Equipment Systems course starting next quarter.

New Trustee Training – Trustee Kirschner and Board Secretary O’Neill attended the Douglas County training on Open Meeting Law and Ethics on February 6th. Both reported it was a great class and received a lot of good information from it.

2015 Nevada Legislature – Opened on February 2nd; Chief Allison and Chief Sharit are tracking multiple bills that are pertinent to many different areas related to government service. They have been at the legislative building testifying in support of some of these bills per our local legislature’s request. Will keep the board posted as updates come in.

Acting Assistant Chief and Battalion Chief Positions – Chief Tim Allison was appointed as the Acting Assistant Chief and has been doing a great job. He is spot on with his reports and is doing very well. The first appointed Acting Battalion Chief is Captain Bryce Cranch. He has been doing a great job. Will keep the board updated on a monthly basis.

Edward Jones Financial Summary – Last month the board directed the Fire Chief to invest up to one million dollars in CDs. Since then, we have purchased two, \$200,000 CDs using Wayne Omel’s current legal contacts and hope to see better rates before purchasing additional CDs. Chief Sharit noted on the financial summary in October, line item two, should have a line next to \$282,188 stating the transfer of 1 million into the RBIF. First deposit was made in November from the Ad Valorem of approximately \$800,000 and brought our balance back up to 1.1 million.

Attachments:

Trustee Orientation of the Fire District – Scheduled for Trustee Kirschner to attend on Tuesday March 3rd and Thursday March 12th. This will not be a public meeting.

NV Fire Chief’s Association 2015 Membership directory - Many photos of our fire district personnel and equipment are featured in this directory.

Tahoe Daily Tribune ad welcoming the Hard Rock Casino to the fire district - Acknowledged Office Manager Warner’s work on this project and the crew’s help on coming up with the slogan “Stop. Rock & Roll”.

Letter received from **Fire Chief Gareth Harris thanking Office Manager Warner** for being a part of their interview panel for a new administrative assistant position at Lake Valley FPD.

Thank you letter from the Chief Deputy District Attorney – Acknowledged Chief Jim Antti, Captain Chris Lucas, Engineer Fred Parson, and Firefighter/Paramedics Justin Reddig and Nick Robidart for their professional manner in testifying at a recent murder trial in Douglas County.

Chairman Schussel asked Fire Marshal Guevin to elaborate on his report regarding El Dorado Savings, Tahoe Moonshine, and the school fire drills.

Fire Marshal Guevin confirmed that **El Dorado Savings is moving into the old Bank of America** on Kingsbury Grade.

Tahoe Moonshine – Now has two locations, one in South Lake Tahoe and one in Stateline in the basement of Dart Liquor. The owners want to have a presence in both California and Nevada and plan to have tastings on the upper floor of Dart Liquor. Sprinkler systems are in the building, now working on exiting issues.

Fire Drill – School staff lost track of three students while they were out at recess during a drill. The reality of the situation is that emergencies do not always happen while children are in class, so it's good to practice for different circumstances.

Ambulance Billing – Vice Chairman Felton noticed that collections were up according to the report. Chief Allison said that they are at about 55%. He noted it could be due to more people signing up for insurance benefits from the Affordable Care Act. Accounting Specialist Nolting and Administrative Assistant O'Neill are now assisting with monthly reporting and daily entries. It is difficult to determine exactly why revenues are up because transport numbers have gone down due to lack of snow and less skiers coming into town.

Chairman Schussel asked if we are in line with other departments and collection agencies.

Chief Allison stated that anything above 50% in collections is good. We have been as high as 59% and as low as 40% in the past. The key is ensuring that everything we submit to the billing company is accurate and submitted early. If the billers do not have everything they need from us, it goes to another place and they are unable to collect right away. Our goal is to make sure we get them everything they need for processing as soon as possible.

Vice Chairman Felton would like to understand why we are not collecting 100% in ambulance billing. For example, he suggested having a visual breakdown of what was not collected and the reason why (10%-Bankruptcy, 5%-Medicaid). This will help for a better understanding of why 55% is actually a pretty good number.

Chief Sharit said yes, we can provide a report of the breakdowns to the board in the future.

Vice Chairman Felton expressed concern about the recent press on South Tahoe Fire and their issues with ambulance billing. Is there anything we need to learn from them?

Chief Sharit stated that they are in a different state and are using a different system than us. He assured the board that our billing is right in line with the hospital billing cycles.

- 14. Discussion:** **There is a conflict with the date of Wednesday, March 25, 2015 with a start time of 3:00 pm and possible agenda items; proposed alternatives will be discussed.**

Meeting confirmed for Thursday, March 26, 2015. Location to be determined. Suggested agenda items:

None.

- 15. Adjourn.**

Trustee Kirschner motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Trustee Kjer seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

Closed Session: Not needed at this meeting.

This meeting was recorded on audio tape.

Casey O’Neill
BOT Secretary
Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District

APPROVED