

TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
August 11, 2020

Those Present:

Chairman Greg Felton
Vice Chairman Larry Schussel
Trustee Kevin Kjer
Trustee Ann Grant

Trustee Bill Kirschner
Legal Counsel Alex Velto
Fire Chief Scott Baker

1. Call to Order.

Meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of allegiance was led by Battalion Chief Brandon Brady.

3. Roll Call.

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

4. Approval of the Agenda.

Trustee Kirschner made a motion to approve the agenda. Trustee Grant seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

5. Public Comment.

NONE.

6. Board Trustee Comment.

Trustee Grant thanked the Zephyr Crew for their efforts during Community Work Days. There were 25 advanced appointments for the Skyland neighborhood and residents were pulling them over all day for additional requests. They tackled a huge amount of work and the community is very grateful.

Trustee Kirschner thanked Chief Baker and Assistant Chief Moss for their efforts in fixing a Douglas County sewer lid in front of his home that was loose.

Trustee Felton thanked Marine 24 for their efforts in the search and rescue mission out on the lake on 08/10/20, but also their continuous efforts to assist in all marine calls, regardless of district.

7. Approval of the Consent Calendar.

Items:

- a. Board Meeting Minutes 07/14/2020

- b. Monthly Expenditures
- c. Administrative Policy – Training Policy
- d. Job Description – FF/AEMT

Trustee Grant motioned to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Trustee Kirschner seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

8. **For Possible Action: Consent items moved forward. None.**

9. **Presentation:**

Employee Recognition Fire

Chief Scott Baker

Service Recognition:

Engineer Kevin Crebs	23 Years of Service
Prevention Captain Todd Stroup	7 Years of Service
Fire Inspector Kris Rowlett	1 Year of Service

10. **Presentation:**

NV Energy plans for risk reduction efforts required within the Fire District and the Basin. No action to be taken.

Mark Regan, Fire Mitigation Specialist/Fire Chief NV Energy

SUMMARY: Regan presented NV Energy’s Natural Disaster Prevention Plan for the Tahoe Basin. Earlier this year, it was filed with the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada to outline plans to help protect the public from the impact of natural disasters on the electric infrastructure, per the guidelines of Senate Bill 329.

NV Energy has:

1. Increased the frequency of their annual pole inspections as well as its vegetation management cycles in extreme fire risk areas. They have installed 30 weather stations and 10/50 wildfire cameras in partnership with UNR to help increase preventative measures.
2. Updated the tree trimming process and are able, in necessary cases, to fully remove trees to eliminate risk of fire.
3. Introduced pole grubbing, the removal of vegetation 10-20’ from the poles, to the inspection /maintenance process. All pole grubbing and vegetation maintenance is being staffed from fire agencies by contract and at no cost to the districts.

4. Implemented the Public Safety Outage Management (PSOM) program in areas where wildfire risk is greatest (Eastern/Nevada side of the Lake Tahoe basin). With the research mapped around the basin, they've learned that they can start to detect high wind warnings and possible outages up to eight days ahead; although the Visitors Authorities have requested that they keep the notification from reaching the public until 72 hours prior to possible loss of power.

This gives NV Energy time to communicate this warning to the Fire Districts, Gaming Control Board and affected communities to prepare for possible outages. Generators will be provided to select facilities and locations to provide additional aid to support battery chargers, medical equipment stations and other needs. These Customer Resource Centers will provide Communication on Wheels Satellites (COWS), refreshments and informational updates regarding regaining power.

Communicating a PSOM event is an essential part of the program. Customer text and email alerts will provide outage time and expected durations. Social media, news outlets and paid media updates will be used to inform communities affected.

The PSOM program is divided into zones - Incline, Glenbrook, Carson-Minden, Round Hill and Kingsbury Grade. Ideally, the goal is to not have power to all zones out at one time during an extreme weather event. NV Energy is also installing more switches within these zones this summer season to help restore power faster.

Trustee Schussel stated that community members are aware of this new process and have expressed concerns over the number of days the basin as a whole would be without power, as well as the amount of traffic moving throughout the District to Kahle Community Center, with only one access road (Kingsbury Grade).

NV Energy has discussed traffic concerns with NHP and DCSO; and different routes and evacuation plans are being reviewed. The POSM would only take place during the summer season and again, the plan is to reenergize the basin in zones, which will help regain power in some areas shortly after, if not immediately following the extreme weather conditions. Air support with drones and planes will be utilized to check lines, to help get power back on in certain zones ASAP. Zones will be prioritized by need to ensure as little loss as possible. The safety of customers and environment is NV Energy's priority.

Trustee Kirschner asked about the logistics of undergrounding utilities throughout the State of Nevada.

NV Energy has submitted plans to the Public Utility Commission, but has yet to be approved. They will be working with the fire agencies on prioritizing what lines need to get underground and in what areas of each district first.

No action required.

11. Report Item:

Update on employee benefits regarding health savings account employer contributions and retiree health. No action to be taken.

Fire Chief Scott Baker

SUMMARY:

Chief Baker reiterated that one of the best parts of his position is the opportunity to acknowledge and take care of the District's hard-working personnel, so that they can prepare for and prevent emergency situations.

1. **Salary Survey and Job Description Reviews** - are underway in preparation for a future recommendation. He acknowledged the positions of Office Manager and Assistant Chief stating that over the past five years which Chief Baker has been with TDFPD, these positions have expanded beyond the current job descriptions and pay scales.
2. **Retiree Health Insurance Benefits** - were inconsistently applied to staff positions. Employment agreements varied greatly between positions and in some cases benefits were not given at all or taken away. He researched the original intent of the retiree health benefit, and confirmed that it was to include all employees. The District has been putting aside the funding the entire time and the Trust will well-funded. The next actuarial report update will reflect all personnel. This has been corrected.

Chief Baker would also like to see these benefits be provided for career positions that will not qualify based the current guidelines (55 years old, 20 years of service). He is recommending that the cost to provide that coverage be reviewed. He wants to extend that coverage to certain individuals who have been dedicated to the District who will not meet the requirements. He also does not want to deter candidates, who may be hired in the future, and who would not be able to meet the 20 year service requirement.

3. **Employer HRA Contribution Rates** – which were adjusted recently (from \$225.00 to \$285.00 per Medicare retiree/spouse) will now be reviewed each year by the Insurance Advisory Committee as per the CBA specifications. This has been corrected and will now be part of the annual insurance renewal process going forward.
4. **Maximum Out of Pocket Rate** – was identified as being inaccurate between our current insurance plans and the CBA after the 2020 insurance renewal process.

Further research confirmed that it had been wrong for years, at least two contract cycles and it needs to be fixed.

5. **Insurance Plans** – were expanded in the past (2017) when the District broker was able to negotiate a 70/30 option, in addition to the 80/20 specified by the CBA at the time. At the same time, the renewal increase exceeded 10%, so some of the increase came from employee H.S.A. contribution adjustments and the rest of the increase came out of the benefits budget. This change got the District into a gray area. Since that time, with the help of our broker, the District has been able to lower the benefits cost. The District saved the money, and the Insurance Advisory Committee has worked hard to get educated on options to continue to provide an attractive benefits package. It is Chief Baker's intent to reset the benefit levels and he will provide the statistical data to support this change at future meeting.
6. **Strategic Plan** - Insurance Advisory Committee - the committee is formulating a Strategic Plan to reference throughout the annual renewal process following the same model as the divisions created with the five year plan.

Chief Baker wants to correct all these details and is engaged in discussions with the Union, if the details change, he will advise the Board. He restated his goal is to develop a standard benefit offering, to create a culture of ownership which is demonstrated through the Insurance Advisory Committee and to promote personal growth and development. Through these changes, the District will continue to provide the best health coverage to our District retirees and current employees.

Chairman Felton expressed his support of the Chief Baker's effort to rectify any inequities that exist and offered his assistance in the effort.

No action required.

12. **Report Item:**

Update on Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) and Multi Agency Coordinating Group (MAC) as it relates to fuels reduction in the fire district. No action to be taken.

Fire Chief Scott Baker

SUMMARY: FMO Schafer, as a member of Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) and Chief Baker, as the MAC Chairman, attended a SNPLMA Executive Committee workshop to review Basin projects and funding. Discussions included SNPLMA projects and financials and Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (LTRA) of 2000. TFFT is preparing priority projects that can

implemented when new SNPLMA funds become available. The final SNPLMA 18 (200M) proposal is due in September. From there it will be reviewed by subgroups, and then reviewed by a working group in November. Applications then go to public comment and scheduled to be passed to the Secretary in April of 2021 before final signature and approval in September of 2021. Then we will be starting the process to submit for SNPLMA 19.

We just cleared SNPLMA 14/15, so these are long term projects and commitments for the District which must be carefully and strategically planned. Project management looks out 10 years, and then grants must be managed carefully to stay in good standing with SNPLMA.

Trustee Grant said why our prior LTRA 2000 funds were never utilized.

Chief Baker stated that the LTRA was approved over 20 years ago for lake clarity and other priorities. Situations may not have worked out as planned, unexpected things happen, like COVID-19. All those little changes have added up to almost \$10M in unused funds.

No action required.

13. **Report Item:**

Follow up regarding fire district investment criteria. No action to be taken.

Legal Counsel Alex Velto and Fire Chief Scott Baker

Chief Baker explained that when he came on board, the previous practice of laddering funds was continued. Laddering in \$200K increments with staggered maturity dates ensures that funds are accessible for both planned and unexpected needs. Other investment options could produce a better return, but may be too long term to meet business needs. He noted that cash on hand needs vary throughout the year, and funds need to be accessible without penalty.

Velto reiterated the question raised at the previous meeting was whether or not the District could be more aggressive with investments. State law does not restrict the types of investments or how a District invests. The only limitation on the District is to be fiscally responsible for the District's investments. An investment which results in losses could be a problem according to state law. At the end of the day, it is the Fire Board's decision on how to help keep the investment growth rate appropriate.

Chairman Felton clarified that he felt the question was actually if the District was required to invest in FDIC protected investments. He surmised that it appears the District is not required to that, and that investments that match the rate of inflation could be considered.

Chief Baker added the District is in the process of updating the investment policy (as part of the Administrative Policy goal) but as discussed previously, it will document current practices unless the Board determines otherwise.

Trustee Felton requested that another discussion be held with our investment advisor noting that the FDIC requirement was incorrect; to see if there are options to consider that will meet the District needs.

No action will be taken.

14. **Report Item:**

Review of Monthly Fire District Activities.

Fire Chief Scott Baker

District Update

IDT Plan Review Software – contract is currently under review with East Fork Fire. IDT provides software that will allow the District's plan submittal process to be done 100% online through an application that will track payments, notations, changes and requests done by the contractors and inspectors – start to finish.

The Insurance Advisory Committee - is moving forward with our goals and objectives that were created in their Strategic Plan.

Equipment Committee - meetings are set up to discuss what equipment purchases and repairs to be prioritized for this year.

Basin Chiefs - are currently involved in a federal grant for Basin Wide Communications signal which will provide not only an up to date communication center but also, smart poles installed throughout the basin. This will allow for continuous Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity for first responders who are out in the field, as well as basin camera coverage to see where an accident or fire is occurring and dispatch our crews before it is reported to 911.

BOCC - will be doing an update on community growth, the District has provided our input including the increase of marine calls experienced this summer season.

District Division Reports

Assistant Chief Todd Moss

Call Volume – for District is currently very busy; and although we are down 65 calls from this month last year, the incidents are complicated and demanding of resources. Many of our more severe calls are Marine 24 rescues - drownings, prop bites, boat fires, and search & rescue assistance.

Wildland Fires – responded to out of area are currently at 10 events.

COVID-19 - positive calls continue with crews responding with necessary precautions and PPE.

New Hires - interviews went very well. The District will be hiring 4 AEMTS.

New Extraction Gear - has been purchased that should be here at the end of the month.

Fire Marshal Eric Guevin

The Fire Prevention Bureau is also very busy, construction has not slowed down in the District despite closures, and businesses are taking advantage of the slower business levels to make repairs and updates.

Harvey's Tower Remodel – is wrapping up with only floors 8, 9 and 10 left to be finished.

Tahoe Beach Club - clubhouse building has opened for the residents to utilize. The property has requested a permit to do a private firework show over Labor Day weekend. Building 2 is about 80% completed and will require a full walk through inspection before residents are allowed to occupy the building.

Cave Rock Waterline Project - should be wrapping and we will be educating the public on the updates once the project is completed.

VHR Program – is transitioning from Host Compliance to HDL for permitting processing as driven by Douglas County. VHR Inspections have been in high demand; inspectors have done 65 inspections in the last 30 days.

Defensible Space Program – the second round of inspections produced only 35 non-compliant addresses; this is the lowest number the District has seen since implementing the program.

FMO Keegan Schafer

Community Work Days – have wrapped up for the District; we received great feedback from our residents and are now assisting the Lake Valley Fire District and the City of South Lake funded by a SNPLMA grant.

Chipping Requests – are still underway, the crew currently has completed about 60 in Tahoe Douglas District and 115 additional requests in South Lake Tahoe.

Compost your Combustibles – resulted in 560,000 lbs., or 280 tons, of compost green waste this season. Thank you letters have been sent to our partnerships in hopes of expanding it for next season.

Zephyr Crew – is currently out in Ely, NV assisting in a wildland fire, making this their 4th out of area assignment for this season. Zephyr Crew has also had 3 assists this season which gives them some back country rescue experience. The Crew numbers have dropped from 37 at the start of the season to 32.

Office Manager Kate Warner

Admin staff is incredibly busy with fire season and end of year wrap ups. Our business has gotten more complex in the last few years. Things that used to be very simple now require a multistep processes, multiple documents and reviews by multiple people. This requires a lot of the Admin staff's time and attention.

Grants - are down to six total grants, with one additional that was just awarded.

Defensible Space Letters - are back on the normal schedule for the rest of the season.

Paperless HR Files - have been created for all 2020 new hires. A template is in place for all future employees.

TDFPD NewsBlog – has been consistency delivered every week for months now, and the Tahoe Tribune and SouthTahoeNow.com both picked the recent promotional announcements.

Public Comment: None.

Confirm next meeting, with a proposed date of **Tuesday, September 08, 2020** with a start time of 2:30 p.m. and possible agenda items.

Possible agenda items include:

- Investment Options
- Open Meeting Presentation
- Website Demonstration

Adjourn

Chairman Felton adjourned the meeting at 4:30pm.
Meeting was conducted virtually and recorded.

Mikayla Warner
Board Secretary Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District

APPROVED