

TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
October 20, 2021

**Those Present:**

Chairman Larry Schussel  
Vice Chairman Bill Kirschner  
Trustee Kevin Kjer  
Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Trustee Janet Murphy  
Legal Counsel Devon Reese

**1. Call to Order.**

Meeting was called to order at 2:31 pm

**2. Pledge of Allegiance.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Schussel.

**3. Roll Call.**

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

**4. Approval of the Agenda.**

Trustee Kirschner made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Trustee Kjer seconded the motion. Motion approved 4-0.

**5. Public Comment.**

None.

**6. Board Trustee Comment.**

Trustee Kirschner has a clean bill of health.

Trustee Kjer conveyed his appreciation for the firefighters and the efforts put forth to save the basin during the Caldor Fire.

Trustee Schussel presented Chief Lindgren with a small gift acknowledging the Fire Chief's efforts, 24/7, during the Caldor Fire to keep the Trustees informed on the status of the fire and District crews.

Chief Lindgren commented that 60/103 TDF employees were assigned to the fire, and many other employees backfilled the stations to keep the District covered. He noted the efforts of other local agencies, including additional resources – Clark County Fire and others - from outside the Basin that were key to preventing the fire's growth and providing coverage to the District.

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**7. Approval of the Consent Calendar.**

**Items:**

- a. Board Meeting Minutes 07/21/2021
- b. Monthly Expenditures
- c. Financials – 12/30/2020, 01/31/2021, 02/28/2021
- d. Job Description – Firefighter/AEMT

Trustee Kjer motioned to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Trustee Murphy seconded the motion. Motion approved 4-0.

**8. For Possible Action: Consent items moved forward.**

None

**9. Presentation: Employee Recognition**

Years of Service - August

Engineer Kevin Crebs	24 Years of Service
Prevention Captain Todd Stroup	8 Years of Service
Fire Inspector Kris Rowlett	2 Year of Service

Years of Service - September

Firefighter/Paramedic Jenny Alustiza	11 years of service
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Years of Service - October

Firefighter/Paramedic Danny Glover	2 Year of Service
Firefighter/Paramedic Peter Keogan	2 Year of Service

**10. Discussion and Possible Action:**

**Discussion and possible approval of Resolution #13-2021 adopting fee changes with Fire Recovery USA for non-resident fire recovery services. First reading, no action will be taken.**

Administrative Division Officer Kate Warner

ADO Warner informed the Trustees that a partnership was established in 2011 with this vendor to mitigate costs for non-District resident responses. History to date: Fire Recovery USA, has recovered over \$65,000 in costs and is averaging an 86% collection rate. It is a low maintenance program; reports are loaded into the portal by the captain, reviewed and approved by the Battalion Chief. Billing rates have not been updated since the original contract was issued ten years ago.

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The vendor uses industry standard rates, not the TDF Fees for Service rates. Fire Marshal Guevin reviewed the rates in comparison with District fees and found very little overlap; he made the recommendation to use the industry standards the vendor is proposing. Also, the services listed in the resolution are more extensive than the District has used in the past, but it is prudent to have them lined out if a situation presents itself.

In the past, the District has not billed for Marine 24 responses on the Lake, as the District accepted donations for the purchase of the boat. However, there are expenses for fuel, labor, training, equipment, repairs related to those responses which the District may want to recoup for in the future.

Chairman Schussel inquired if there were any legal concerns with capturing expenses for responses on a piece of equipment purchased with donations. Counsel Reese clarified that they are not related concepts, as the District is an emergency response agency.

First reading - no action was taken.

**11. Discussion and Possible Action:**

**Set a date for the Annual Performance Appraisal for the Fire Chief and select board members to compile results for the Performance Appraisal.**

Chairman Schussel

Trustee(s) Kirschner and Murphy volunteered and were directed by the Chairman as such with the following scheduled:

- 11/01/21 Performance Evaluations will be distributed to all Trustees
- 11/19/21 Completed forms should be returned to Board Secretary Warner, who will summarize the comments for the Fire Chief Performance Interview
- 12/01-17/21 Performance interview will be conducted by Trustees Kirschner and Murphy with Chief Lindgren – exact date/time to be determined
- 12/29/21 December BOT meeting

In 2020, the Trustees had requested access to employees prior to the review to gain feedback; the Trustees declined that option at this time.

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**12. Tahoe Douglas' EOD Dog introduction and demonstration.**

Fire Inspector Kris Rowlett

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Inspector Rowlett reviewed the District's long history with the Bomb Squad which was expanded in 2016 with the addition of bomb dog, Gunner. An Explosive Detection Canine (EDC) plays an integral role in the sweep process prior to a high risk event, like the annual Nevada Day Parade and the American Century Golf Tournament. For the parade, the EOD squad will provide a sweep and stand-by which involves two (2) EOD Techs and a dog. Tracker is the fourth (4) EOC resource in this area - Reno PD has one (1) and UNR has two (2). The Reno/Tahoe Airport Authority has four (4) dogs, but it's difficult to get the dogs off the airport for any length of time.

Inspector Rowlett had expressed an interest in becoming a dog handler when former Chief Moss/Gunner retired. In July, Chief Lindgren had done his research and was ready to move forward with the program; then, a unique opportunity presented when a fully trained dog became available at a Las Vegas training center.

The handler training class began days after the initial notification, and involved 120 hours teaching IF Rowlett how to stay out of the dog's way, and trust him to perform. Since then, CA & NV post-certifications have been obtained. Typically, on all EOD calls, a dog goes along to sweep for secondary devices to protect the EOD techs.

Tracker was initially imprinted with 12 scents, and now is imprinted for 14 scents. Imprinting involves introducing the dog to a scent, allowing him to "know" the scent and then, rewarding when the dog locates the scent. Drills are purposely set up with similar scents without rewarding the find as to avoid a "false final". Tracker is a Hungarian Vizsla breed, which is very thorough and detail orientated and is known for its hunting capabilities. When the dog finds the desired scent, he points with his tail and nose. Then, the handler confirms the find, marks the dog and tosses the reward (toy) in the opposite direction to get the dog to a safe location away from the scent.

Fire Marshal Guevin added that the opportunity to get the training was not ideal in the middle of fire season, but there was a significant cost savings. Also, Captain Stoup was expected to go out on paternity leave, so the decision was made to do it immediately.

Chief Lindgren added that the commitment and timing was a collaborated decision with the EOD Commander, Captain Will Darr and the Douglas County Sheriff Dan Coverley. Gunner's retirement left a serious void with the concerts and events typically hosted in South Shore and with the new event center which is under construction. The Edgewood golf event takes four (4) dogs every day of the golf tournament to cover all the terrain.

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Typically, a trained dog costs \$18-20K to purchase the dog, not including the training required. In this case, the original handler washed out of the course, and the training center was aware that there was interest from TDF and negotiated a \$11.5K price. Failing to bond, was a deal breaker, but it's clear that the bond between Inspector Rowlett and Tracker is amazing which is critical to the dog's and the EOC program's success.

The Federal Bureau Investigation (FBI) and Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) are planning to re-enact the Harvey's Bombing from the 1980s to use as a training opportunity down the road. Inspector Rowlett, Tracker and the Tahoe-Douglas Bomb Squad will be very eager to participate.

A sweeping demonstration followed the meeting.

### **13. District Division Reports**

There were no questions from the Trustees on the Division Reports, verbal reports were forgone due to time constraints.

### **14. Review of Monthly Activities.**

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Acknowledged the high demand of the 2021 fire season and the awesome response of the District employees who reported back to stations when called. He noted that the District had some employees who worked 20+ days without a day off and that Chief Brady spent 60 days on fire assignments. It made a huge difference in keeping our community safe and keeping the fire out of Nevada.

**Sierra Tahoe Ski Resort** was devastated by the Caldor fire, where 300' flame lengths caused serious damage. TDF had task forces there defending the property during the event and they saved the main lodges, but lost the maintenance buildings full of equipment. The resort has been in business for almost 75 years and employs 700 locals with 150 of those positions being full-time employees who need to work. The USFS owns the land, but did not provide mitigation efforts to remove dead burned trees, so other agencies have volunteered to assist. The Zephyr Crew has been assigned to help mitigate the hazards and get the resort open on some level – non-paid service to help our community get open for the ski season which is good for our community. To date, the crew has dropped 2267 trees and has provided days of chipping of damaged limbs.

**Remodel ST22** – Crew Quarters – plans were presented to the Trustees

**Remodel ST25** – draft plans are forthcoming

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**Type 5 Fire Engine** – TDF has never had a Type 5 before so training will be underway with personnel. The cost for the engine was \$186K, and fully loaded with equipment the total came to \$220K. While the District paid up front for the Type 5, NV Energy has since reimbursed the District for the initial cost. When equipment is used on a NV Energy project, those equipment expenses are tracked and deducted from NV Energy invoices. This will occur until the cost of Type 5 is paid off and TDF ultimately own it. It can be sent on other fires and the District can bill for that.

**Water Tender** - waiting on parts to repair the transfer case (\$4K) and when fixed it will be sold. It has a manual transmission, which is tricky to drive. It is not well suited for our district – under powered and under braked for our altitude. The District is leaning towards a used replacement. Billing for that piece of equipment on the Caldor Fire was \$28-29K. The Apparatus Committee identified this replacement as their top priority.

**M24** - low water levels are presenting a challenge for firefighters to get access to the standpipes. Crews are developing an emergency plan with smaller hose and are testing procedures to use a paddle board to get the hose to the stand pipe.

**Annual Audit** – was delayed due to evacuations, but is going well.

**Fuels Reduction** – our historical work has been solid, but the District still lacks fuel breaks completely around our neighborhoods because of the USFS lines. Talks are underway to allow District crews to burn existing piles on the USFS land. Then, ridges will be identified to know where and how crews can stop future fires. Meetings have been underway with our Congressmen/Senators and there's a lot of support and funding available. The Zephyr Crew and the NV Energy program will be expended next year beyond the original expectations.

**Fire/Rescue Helicopter** – a presentation is being developed and will be introduced to the Trustees at the November meeting. To do the program right, \$60-70M will be needed, so phases may be necessary. It will save lives and property in the future. It absolutely would prevent a situation like the Tamarack Fire.

**Glenbrook Community** - has funded in partnership with NV Energy the underground placement of their powerlines which will help protect that community from potential fire starts from power lines.

Trustee Murphy inquired as to the market for the water tender. Chief Lindgren estimated \$30-40K potential for re-sale and it would be well suited for another area with flatter terrain, and the District has already identified potential buyers.

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**Public Comment:**

Fire Marshal Guevin acknowledge FMO Schafer for his prescribed fire presentation with Living with Fire.

Confirm next meeting, with a proposed date of **Wednesday, November 17, 2021** with a start time of 2:30p.m.

**Adjourn**

**Submitted by:**

Kate Warner

Administration Division Officer