

TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
May 17, 2023

Those Present:

Chairman Larry Schussel
Vice Chair Greg Felton
Trustee Stacy Noyes
Trustee Ben Johnson

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren
Legal Counsel Russell Carr, Esq.
Trustee Janet Murphy (virtual)

1. Call to Order.

Meeting was called to order at 2:33 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Felton.

3. Roll Call.

Chairman Schussel, Vice Chair Felton, Trustee Johnson and Trustee Noyes were present.
A quorum was met.

4. Approval of the Agenda.

Trustee Noyes made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Second: Trustee Johnson.
Motion approved 4-0.

5. Public Comment: None.

6. Trustee Comments: Trustee Johnson followed up with KGID regarding the ongoing hydrant situation. KGID's Board Member Cindy Trigg has been in touch with Trustee Johnson and will update the District after they have a meeting. Chairman Schussel thanked Trustee Johnson for his persistence in this situation.

Vice Chair Felton acknowledged Firefighter Nolan Weintz on his achievement as the Valedictorian of his paramedic class. Chief Lindgren also acknowledged Firefighter Weintz and discussed how Weintz is a recipient of the Tahoe Douglas Fire (TDF) Paramedic Scholarship, recently renamed the "*Bruce Kanoff Paramedic Scholarship*." ADO Kate Warner discovered that Kanoff was the driving force in TDF reaching and sustaining paramedic level care. In his honor, the paramedic scholarship was named after him.

Trustee Murphy arrived and attended virtually.

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7. Approval of the Consent Calendar.

- a. Board Meeting Minutes 04/26/2023
- b. Monthly Expenditures
- c. Financials – 09/30/2022
- d. Job Description – Lead Crew Member

Vice Chair Felton made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar with an amendment to the minutes. The amendment to the minutes did not change the context of the minutes.

Second: Trustee Noyes. Motion approved 5-0.

8. Consent items moved forward: None.

9. Special Recognition

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Assistant Chief Cranch presented a very unique gift that was donated to the District by the family of Bruce Kanoff.

Engineer Brad Petersen
Accounting Specialist

16 years
2 years

10. Public Hearing and Possible Adoption of the FY 2023-2024 Tentative Budget.

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Chief Lindgren presented the Tentative Budget.

This year, there was a formula error in the Tentative Budget that was submitted to the State, however the error was fixed. There was no public comment on the Tentative Budget.

Vice Chair Felton asked Chief Lindgren to clarify the budget process for our new Trustees. Chief Lindgren responded throughout the year, Finance Manager Nolting maintains a “Services and Supplies (S&S)” spreadsheet that is monitored by Chiefs and Division head and then utilized for the budget. The numbers in the Tentative Budget are the “working budget” which combine the fund balances from the audit, current fund YTD trends from the S&S and anticipated changes. Vice Chair Felton added that the concept of having multiple people involved in the budget process is helpful for so many reasons. Vice Chair Felton made a motion to approve the Tentative Budget. Second: Trustee Noyes Approved: 5-0

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11. Public Hearing and Possible Adoption of the FY 2023-2024 Final Budget.

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Chief Lindgren noted some changes from the Tentative Budget to the Final Budget. Chief Lindgren is estimating that when he gets the audit back, it'll show that the District spent less than planned and had more revenue than anticipated.

Chief Lindgren discussed how the District has a good, solid budget while still maintaining being conservative with built-in contingencies.

Chief Lindgren discussed the increases the District has been experiencing with the healthcare costs. The cost has been increasing at a rate that is not maintainable. The District feels confident enough in the budget to become partially self-insured. Vice Chair Felton questioned Schedule 31, regarding the Schedule of Existing Contracts? The Aetna insurance doubles from 650,000 to \$1.2 million; is that what the District would expect if we stayed with Aetna? Chief Lindgren responded that the \$1.2 million reflects the number if we were not switching over to the partially self-funded.

Vice Chair Felton commented that the General Fund Budget from 2014 was \$3.5 million and now the General Fund Budget is \$16.5 million. Felton encouraged the District to be conscious of these increases. Chief Lindgren reassured the Trustees that if the District doesn't bring in the revenue, then we are not going to have the expenditures. The District is on track with their predicted revenue and expenditures for the current fiscal year.

Chief Schafer's Wildland Fire & Fuels Division has doubled and the District is receiving tax revenue to support that growth, plus contracts for fuels reduction work that brings in a steady income. For a long time, the District was running a seasonal fire crew, however we found contracts that allowed us to do more work year round including a massive increase in the contracts we have with the Forest Service. Chief Lindgren announced the plan to promote ten Crew Members to permanent employees. Overall, the District has a contingency plan built into the budget in order to not have to lay people off or change benefit programs in the future. Chief Lindgren believes that the District has a solid, well managed budget.

No further questions or comments. Trustee Murphy made a motion to adopt the final budget 2023-2024 as presented. Second: Trustee Johnson. Motion approved 5-0.

Chairman Schussel thanked everyone involved for their hard work on the budget.

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12. Discussion and Approval of Resolution #001-2023, proposing Fees For Service for EMS rate changes to become effective on July 1, 2023 – no action to be taken.

Assistant Chief Bryce Cranch

Chief Cranch presented in place of Chief Brady.

Chief Cranch discussed that the EMS Division has goals to improve the financial revenue and to improve rate standing. Chief Brady moved the ambulance billing to Sharp Billing. The District is staying in pace with what other agencies are doing, in conclusion setting ourselves up for a better trajectory. The District has added inter-facility transport fee in this proposal because there hasn't been a fee structure to get paid for those transports which may be needed during an evacuation of Barton Hospital.

Following the Medicare rate increase, we are proposing setting a long distance transport rate. Chief Cranch and Trustee Johnson thanked Chief Brady for researching the market and proposing these changes.

Vice Chair Felton asked what classifies a long distance transfer? Chief Cranch replied that it is usually outside of the region, for example from Barton Hospital to Placerville or Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center to Davis. Vice Chair Felton asked, does that set an expectation about the rate? Chief Lindgren responded that the District has had the capability to set a rate, however we did not have the mechanism to bill for it, which is why we are now building that into our fee structure. The District is also thinking long term; setting up for this now is preparing us for when the new Barton Hospital opens.

Vice Chair Felton asked about the specifics regarding the 3% increase? Why would we cap our increase on those? Chief Cranch informed this was a formula put together from Chief Brady's research. Right now, the District does not bill people for "treated, no transport". Felton would like that question passed along to Chief Brady for clarification.

Vice Chair Felton asked for more information regarding the 6 x Medicare reimbursement raise relating to long distance transfers. The District takes into account that personnel are driving twice the distance that the patient is being transported. Chief Lindgren noted that another scenario to consider is if personnel are transporting all day then they may need to rest for the night in a hotel. No further comments. No action to be taken.

13. Discussion and Approval of Resolution #002-2023, for promotion of the Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Awareness Month – May 2023.

Inspector Kris Rowlett

Inspector Rowlett is following up on a resolution from the April County Board of Commissioners meeting. This is an annual basin wide initiative to raise awareness of the risk of wildfire. This resolution is a proclamation for the Board to recognize that this is Wildfire Awareness Month. The District is open burning until May 22nd.

Vice Chair Felton mentioned the Public Safety Announcement that Chief Lindgren put out recently. Chief Lindgren updated that there are over 1.2 million dead trees in the Basin, which has increased significantly compared to previous years.

Vice Chair Felton made a motion to approve Resolution #002-2023. Second: Noyes.
Motion approved: 5-0

14. Discussion and Approval of Resolution #003-2023, identifying the terms and conditions for the Fire District suppression personnel response away from their official duty station and assigned to an emergency incident.

Finance Manager Carrie Nolting

Chief Lindgren discussed that in order for the State of California to pay the District for sending resources, there has to be a resolution to adopt every year. The resolution ensures that it's not a different pay rate. The only difference this year is that instead of three resolutions, we condensed them into two resolutions.

Trustee Johnson asked about the difference between sending a fire crew to California versus another area, for example Washoe County or out of state other than California. Finance Manager Nolting explained that CALOES allows us to bill on an average rate system, where NDF/BLM can be billed at the actual pay rate of the personnel assigned to the fire. Chief Lindgren discussed further details regarding how different regions have different rates and there is a process we follow.

Vice Chair Felton inquired as to what happens if CALOES doesn't pay the District what is expected? Chief Lindgren confirmed that CALOES has a good track record from over the years with regards to paying their contracts. CALOES has a new system that they're transitioning to that will speed up the payment process. No further comments.

Trustee Johnson motioned to approve Resolution #003-2023. Second: Noyes.
Motion approved 5-0

15. Discussion and Approval of Resolution #004-2023, identifying the terms and conditions for the Fire District non suppression personnel response away from their official duty station and assigned to an emergency incident.

Finance Manager Carrie Nolting

Chief Lindgren discussed the non-suppression personnel response.

Vice Chair Felton made a motion to approve Resolution #004-2023 as submitted.

Second: Trustee Noyes. Motion approved. 5-0

16. Report Item: Review Division Reports

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Bryce Cranch – Assistant Chief

Chief Cranch discussed recruitment options. Recognition was given to the line staff and the mechanics for working together on getting some major repairs done. Station 25 has been working on the lighting project in their station.

There is a potential for the District to get a contract with Nevada Office of Science Innovation and Technology (NV OSIT). This contract would benefit the District immensely due to the new “fiber broadband” that is going to be installed along the highways. It would help with internet stability and speed for the District’s digital back hauls using fiber instead of copper phone lines, all in all, improving our radio systems. This partnership could be a really big opportunity for strengthening our radio communications. The District’s goal is to contract with NV OSIT to link the fiber lines from the highway to each fire station, while they already have a contractor in the field, in order to avoid additional costs. Chief Cranch added that the Tahoe Prosperity Center is pushing really hard to make this unity happen.

Vice Chair Felton asked about the details of a call TDF responded to at Edgewood. Chief Cranch reported the maintenance guy was working on swimming pool equipment, when suddenly the filter basket over pressurized and caused the filter to explode, causing an injury to his hand. C-Shift responded to the call and there were no other injuries or concerns.

Keegan Schafer – Wildland Fire & Fuels Battalion Chief/Crew Superintendent

Chief Schafer extended an invitation to the Board members to observe the Spider excavator in action the last week of May. Wildland Fire & Fuels Division is hoping to extend what has been completed in Glenbrook to other parts of the District.

Chief Lindgren added that due to the special tax the District has, we are able to help some of the elderly folks who cannot create defensible space on their own.

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Chairman Schussel asked how do we determine who gets trained on the Spider? The District encouraged NV Energy to buy this piece of equipment along with training a fleet of operators on the equipment. The company, Lichtenstein, sent trainers to Verdi to train local operators. Six personnel in the District are trained, but we mainly have two operators. One of our operators, Joe Stamps, has previous experience with similar equipment.

Fire Inspector - Kris Rowlett

Vice Chair Felton asked about how the Harrah's/Harvey's inspections went. Both Inspector Rowlett and Inspector Garrison will be taking turns on the inspections at Harrah's/Harvey's. Rowlett advised the District is making progress on some of the major areas of concern. As Chief Lindgren has previously mentioned, Harrah's/Harvey's are both dated buildings with old layouts. Harvey's, specifically, has a plan to tear down the mountain tower all the way to the floor and part of the casino. A strategic plan has been set, in order to get Corporate to be more proficient in getting on board with things such as alarm systems and the compliance to the fire watches.

The Hard Rock Casino has been difficult over the years, because they haven't put effort into updating the property. The District is excited that the new owner of the Hard Rock Casino has done some previous work with fire departments.

Fire Prevention recently met with the staff of Bally's and they're excited for what's to come from Bally's.

The Ridge had a change in ownership, causing more compliance issues than we previously had there.

Edgewood has been very easy to work with. It is a much newer facility. They still plan to do a 4th of July Fireworks show.

Vice Chair Felton asked about the opening date of the event center. Rowlett advised the tentative opening date is right after Labor Day weekend.

Douglas County's most recent Vacation Home Rental (VHR) meeting resulted in no significant changes in the ordinance. Douglas County will have addendums to the ordinance in June. The density will go from 20% to 15% in all neighborhoods except for the Tramway area. Chairman Schussel asked what makes up the density? Rowlett responded, all of the lake except Tramway and Quaking Aspen are going to move to 15%. Douglas County views Tramway and Quaking Aspen as a tourist area, therefore the density has moved up to 40%. Chairman Schussel expanded his question by asking for clarification on if each neighborhood gets 15%? Rowlett continued, each neighborhood gets 15%, however if your HOA prohibits them, then you cannot get a VHR. Chief Lindgren asked Rowlett to bring the neighborhood map to the next meeting.

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Kate Warner - Administrative Division Officer

ADO Warner thanked Chief Prather and Captain Pratt for their assistance during the Kanoff Memorial service. The District has received many donations towards the Bruce Kanoff Paramedic Scholarship.

In regards to Wildland Fire & Fuels, the District has its first female Engineer/Squad Leader – Courtney James.

HR Specialist (HRS) McCarthy and ADO Warner met with POOL/PACT to discuss the annual Service Plan to ensure use of the resources that they offer. They set up tentative guidelines to provide support to people who are being promoted. HRS McCarthy is very close to completing the discipline policy and has been working diligently on updating District personnel policy.

The next few months are going to be UKG focused. Payroll Specialist Labrado has worked hard on getting the accrual information for each employee entered into UKG. ADO Warner said a big “thank you” to FF/PM Fording, HR Specialist McCarthy, Administrative Assistant Keeton and Fire Prevention/Public Information Officer Turner for their efforts on social media. The consistency and informative posts are improving our outreach and recruitment.

Vice Chair Felton asked about East Fork Fire Protection District and their utilization of UKG. ADO Warner replied that East Fork hired an outside consultant to get the system on track.

17. Report Item: Review of Monthly Fire District Activities. No action will be taken.
Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Chief Lindgren discussed some save the dates:

- June 9, 2023 – Capital City Regional Fire Academy Graduation at Corley Ranch in Gardnerville
- July 11 - 16, 2023 - Celebrity Golf Tournament at Edgewood
- October 16, 2023 - Edgewood Charity Golf Tournament for the helicopter program, - 21 different supporting agencies are all going to send teams and board members to participate

The bank building lease has been extended. The tentative plan is to move the Zephyr Crew into the bank building when the remodel for Station 22 . The bank building is furnished with reused and recycled items, some of them being donated from Trustee Noyes. Trustee Johnson requested to have a community event so the public can see what the District is doing with that building.

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18. **Discussion:** Confirm next meeting, with a proposed date of Wednesday, June 28, 2023, with a start time of 2:30 pm and possible agenda items.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:02 PM

Submitted by:
Amanda Keeton
Fire Board Clerk

APPROVED