

TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
November 29, 2023

Those Present:

Chief Scott Lindgren

Assistant Chief Bryce Cranch

Chairman Larry Schussel (virtual)

Vice Chair Greg Felton

Legal Counsel Jason Guinasso

Trustee Stacy Noyes

Trustee Janet Murphy

Trustee Ben Johnson

1. Call to Order.

Meeting was called to order at 2:30pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sawyer Sanders.

3. Roll Call.

Vice Chair Felton, Trustee Johnson, Trustee Noyes and Trustee Murphy were all 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:

Chairman Schussel attended virtually at 2:35pm.

Vice Chair Felton read the public comment legal requirements to the public.

Melissa Saderston, Director of Tahoe Forests Matter questioned what is being done for structure protection and why the District does not have more *Fire Wise* communities. Saderston encourages the community to learn to live safely among fire.

Cynthia Mohiuddin, resident of Stateline, had concerns regarding the *NV Energy Resiliency Corridor Project*. She primarily requests the District to only remove trees for efficiency and fire prevention, not for making a profit. Ensure that the “right” trees are being cut down by including a Forester in the selection of which trees will be cut down. She voiced concerns about evacuation routes for the community “*Tahoe Village*”, which has one way in and one way. The question was posed, “Will the District be able to rescue everyone?”

Stacy Baker, resident of Stateline, believes the *NV Energy Utility Resiliency Corridor Project* is commercial logging, under the falsehood of fire safety and perpetuated by Tahoe Douglas Fire

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Protection District. Baker expressed concerns about the amount of trees that are being removed. She provided suggestions in place of tree removal: to utilize new technology, for example, a sensor to be placed on power poles to provide alerts, and place powerlines underground adjacent to sewer equipment. Baker and her neighbor, Dave Simon, have over one hundred and twenty signatures for their cause, stating “No one is against forest thinning, but removing 90% of the forest is commercial logging.”

Garth Alling, local ecologist, spoke regarding the *NV Energy Resiliency Corridor Project*. He commends the District for starting this project. He is pleased that this project is in full swing and stated it is a public safety project and also a forest health project. Continued implementation of this project is vital for our forests and will help prevent future wildfires.

- 6. **Trustee Comments:** none

- 7. **Approval of the Consent Calendar.**
 - a. Board Meeting Minutes 10/18/23
 - b. Monthly Expenditures
 - c. Financials – 05/31/2023, 06/30/2023

Trustee Johnson made a motion to approve the consent calendar.
Second: Trustee Noyes
Motion Approved: 5–0.

- 8. **Consent items moved forward: None.**

9. **NV Energy**

Will Morgan and Danyale Howard conducted a Power Point presentation regarding the *NV Energy Resiliency Corridor Project*. Howard expressed that NV Energy’s project is coming from a reactive stance and the presentation is to showcase the work that has been done in this area.

Project Manager Will Morgan discussed his role with the *NV Energy Resiliency Corridor Project*. Morgan oversees the undergrounding program and is also responsible for the copper wire initiative. NV Energy Natural Disaster Protection (NDPP) System Hardening was discussed in detail including:

- Patrols and detailed inspections
- Covered conductor/copper wire replacement
- Selective undergrounding
- Single pole requirements
- Expulsion fuse replacements

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- Lightning arrestor replacements
- Tree attachment removals
- Substation hardening

Trustee Murphy stated that the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) will be doing a fiber optics project and asked if NV Energy is looking into using the fiber optics trenches to run conduit? Murphy suggested that the power can go underground with today's technology.

Trustee Noyes indicated that she learned a lot from the presentation.

Vice Chair Felton mentioned how he grew up in a community where the residents assessed themselves and their taxes, then put their money towards installing lines underground. He asked if this was something that District communities may look into. Danyale Howard advised that this is a policy issue and was also done in Spanish Springs. They assessed themselves and it was a line item on their bill. Danyale will investigate this and bring the information back to the Board as it is regulated by the Public Utility Commission (PUC).

Chairman Schussel also thanked NV Energy for their presentation. He indicated that underground utilities are the way to go but it is a question of money and where it is going to come from. Trustee Felton agreed that this topic is very contentious.

NV Energy Fire Management Officer, Kevin Lawson, spoke on the Natural Disaster Protection Plan. He said that fuels mitigation in the right of ways maintains and ensures the safety of the public and secures the integrity of the power lines. No project work is done without prior approval. They are not the Area Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and permitting must be done years in advance and stewardships need to be in place. He said that NV Energy works with the Chief Lindgren and BC Monaghan, noting that Asplundh, VM West and the fire Districts are all contracted. They all must follow the permitting process and hit many benchmarks that are laid out by Lake Tahoe Bureau Management Unit (LTBMU). When trees are marked by a contracted forester, the forest service goes and validates them. Most of the work could not be done without the help of the fire Districts.

Trustee Johnson addressed the public concern that VM West threatens to cut more trees if someone complains. Kevin Lawson replied that VM West has a scope of work they must stick to. If someone has a concern, they are referred to a subject matter expert. Lawson addressed the 624 line and said it will act as an alternate source and reduce down time.

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Trustee Johnson asked how much discretion there is in what trees get cut? Lawson responded that there isn't a lot of subjectivity on what gets cut. Trees immediately in the right of way need to be removed. The Forest Service is involved in what gets cut and it is coordinated with local foresters.

The Board thanked NV Energy for the presentation.

10. Discussion and possible approval of the Fire Chief's Annual Performance Evaluation.

Chairman Larry Schussel and Trustee Ben Johnson

Chairman Schussel explained the performance evaluation process stating that it contained twelve questions with a score ranging between 1 through 5. The total score for the Fire Chief's evaluation came out to be 56. Trustee Johnson was impressed with Chief Lindgren's desire to know where he could improve. Trustee Murphy agreed that the Chief is doing a great job. Vice Chair Felton thanked the Board for their time, comments and how they completed the evaluation.

Chairman Schussel made a motion to approve the Fire Chief's annual performance evaluation.

Second: Trustee Noyes

Motion Approved: 5-0

11. District Divisions

Chief Lindgren addressed the Board and asked if there were any questions on the division reports.

Trustee Johnson inquired as to why the fuel break project was selected on Kingsbury Grade. Chief Lindgren stated that the biggest threat to the community is around Kingsbury Grade and Chief Schafer is working with the Forest Service to get this fuel break project in place. Skyland was a test project which provides residents with a sample plot to show what a protective fuel break should look like..

Vice Chair Felton said there is a lot of work that goes into the reports and thanked everyone for their efforts compiling them.

Chief Lindgren discussed the evacuation plans in the Tahoe Basin. The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) and Multi Agency Coordination (MAC) have been discussing evacuation strategies with law enforcement and other agencies. Together, three goals have been determined:

- Create a Tahoe Basin evacuation plan
- Allow each agency to input items specific to their jurisdiction
- Practice fire and law enforcement unified command.

12. Review of Monthly Fire District Activities.

Chief Scott Lindgren

13. Special Recognition

Chief Scott Lindgren

Service Recognition:

November

Engineer Paul Apple	11 Years of Service
Engineer Scott Van Dover	11 Years of Service
Captain Justin Reddig	11 Years of Service
Captain Kyle Fine	11 Years of Service

Employee Military Service Recognition:

United States Army

Firefighter/Paramedic Josef Almeida
Engineer Paul Apple
Lead Crew Member Kenan Hart
Chairman Larry Schussel
Crew Member Matthew Weir (seasonal)
Crew Member Robert Rausch (seasonal)
Fire Standby Specialist Ron Stamps (seasonal)

United States Navy

Engineer Greg Koeck

United States Army National Guard

Firefighter/Paramedic Joseph Fording

United States Navy Reserve

Crew Member Alex Leal-Diaz

Promotions:

Captain Curtis Baker pinned by wife Dr. Abby Baker

Captain Ryan Sanders pinned by son Sawyer Sanders

Engineer Chris Wade pinned by Chief Lindgren

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Battalion Chief Mike Monaghan pinned by wife Emily Monaghan

Squad Leader Will Schultz pinned by BC Monaghan

Chairman Schussel thanked everyone for all of their hard work and their families for supporting them.

13. Public Comment

None.

Discussion: Confirm next meeting, with a proposed date of Wednesday, December 20, 2023 with a start time of 2:30PM and possible agenda items.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:33PM.

Submitted by:

Amanda Keeton

Fire Board Clerk