

TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
August 16, 2023

**Those Present:**

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren  
Chairman Larry Schussel  
Vice Chair Greg Felton  
Trustee Ben Johnson

Legal Counsel Jason Guinasso  
Trustee Janet Murphy

**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 Chair Felton, Trustee Johnson and Trustee Murphy were all present.  
A quorum was met.

**4. Approval of the Agenda.**

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

**5. Public Comment: None.**

**6. Trustee Comments:**

Vice Chair Felton acknowledged how busy the District has been. For example, there were 68 projects in the Fire Prevention Bureau and 41 VHR inspections. Felton thanked everyone for keeping up during this busy season.

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

- a. Board Meeting Minutes 06/28/23
- b. Monthly Expenditures
- c. Financials – 01/31/2023, 02/28/2023, 03/31/2023
- d. Job Descriptions – FPS/PIO
- e. Personnel Policy – 2.10 – 2.27
- f. Personnel Policy – 11.1

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Trustee Johnson made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as presented.

Second: Trustee Murphy.

Motion approved 4-0.

Vice Chair Felton commented that it is easier to see new updates on policies when they are highlighted.

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

**9. Special Recognition**

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

*July*

Mike Monaghan

15 Years of Service

Hired in 2008, promoted to FT in July 2019

Brent Tajkowski

6 Years of Service

*August*

Conner Bradley

7 Years of Service

Hired in 2015, promoted to FT August 2020

Kris Rowlett

4 Years of Service

*CCRFA Graduates:*

David Martland

Djair Sancho

*Oath:*

Fire Prevention Specialist/PIO Michelle Turner

Badge Pinning

**10. Update on the plan regarding the responsibility of Kingsbury General Improvement District (KGID) Fire Hydrant Snow Removal for the Winter 2023-2024 Season.**

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Chief Lindgren reminded the Board there are eight major water purveyors in the District. The District has had a few meetings with the General Manager, Mitch Dion, of KGID to discuss the situation with the fire hydrants.

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Each winter, the District crews do what we can in helping shovel hydrants. We also promote the *Adopt a Hydrant* program, where the community members select a hydrant to take care of and in return receive a Tahoe Douglas Fire t-shirt and recognition for their help.

The District requested that KGID advise their snow plow drivers to not cover the hydrants in snow, however the problem still continued after the request was made.

Legal Counsel Devon Reese provided documentation to the District regarding the fire code, and it very clearly states that the water purveyor is responsible for maintaining clearance of all obstructions around that hydrant. The District provided the material to the General Manager (GM) of KGID. The GM does not agree with the District, so the Fire Board agreed to have two Board Members, Vice Chair Felton and Trustee Johnson, and Trustee Murphy as a backup, to meet with KGID's Board and GM in order to agree on a solution to the problem.

Chief Lindgren advised the Board that Attorney Alex Velto drafted a letter including the laws on who is responsible for maintaining clearance of all obstructions from around the hydrant. If KGID doesn't abide by the law, then the District could potentially fine KGID. Trustee Johnson and Vice Chair Felton have attempted to meet with their Board multiple times. Trustee Murphy also attended one of the KGID Board meetings. Chief Lindgren noted that the District's attempts to meet with their Board Members are to collaborate and come to a solution.

Trustee Johnson expressed frustration working with the KGID Board Members, explaining that he asked KGID's Trustees to meet with him and then he would not hear anything back. Trustee Johnson further described how he and Vice Chair Felton went to a KGID Public Meeting and gave public comment, asking if they will speak to them regarding the hydrants. The GM was not cooperative in finding a solution to the problem. Vice Chair Felton added they communicated very clearly that the District is continuing to encourage residents to adopt a hydrant, along with TDF doing our part in shoveling hydrants when we can. The District has asked to be on the next KGID Board Meeting agenda; however that has not been confirmed.

Chief Lindgren talked to the State Fire Marshal and the State can also fine KGID for not maintaining the clearance of the fire hydrants.

Chief Lindgren discussed one caveat is that KGID provides water to certain developments by contract, one of which is Lake Village and they do their own snow removal. In that case, Lake Village is responsible for those hydrants in their area, because they contract the water supply.

Legal Counsel Jason Guinasso, advised that the situation is clearly a public safety issue. Failing to act equals liability; for example, a plaintiff who loses a loved one in a fire, could

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potentially sue both entities for not taking action regarding the hydrants, but ultimately there is going to be an expense.

Guinasso continued the discussion adding that the District's Board has done everything possible to engage in a conversation with KGID, but with winter approaching in a few months, it might be best to consider taking action now. A fine being the minimum reaction to the negligence KGID has shown in this matter. Guinasso suggested taking an aggressive approach because the stakes are that high.

Vice Chair Felton doesn't think any information the District has provided to the GM has been passed on to KGID's Legal Counsel. Felton hopes the District can get to a point of understanding without being adversarial. Guinasso advised the District to take a staged approach. If KGID ignores the first letter the District sends, it will be followed by a second letter from the attorneys.

Chairman Schussel suggests a smaller step before the District takes a legal route.

Lindgren pointed out that the previous GM of KGID acknowledged that it was their responsibility.

Chairman Schussel conferred that there will not be a conclusion until both parties agree on the responsibility. He suggested the District show KGID's lawyer from a legal standpoint that it is their responsibility to handle this and to make sure the District is very direct in what we are expecting from them. Chairman Schussel also proposed that whatever expectation the District makes of KGID, needs to be made for all the other water districts as well.

Chief Lindgren suggested that the District provide documentation to KGID on how easily we work together with the other GID'S. For example, previously, the District had an issue with one other GID in Glenbrook, where they removed the "markers" that the fire department uses to locate the hydrants. They discussed the importance of the markers with Glenbrook, showed them the law and then they cooperated by putting the markers back.

Vice Chair Felton suggested the District get the statement from the State Fire Marshal, in writing and that the District try to get tangible confirmation from the rest of the water purveyors that they understand it is their responsibility to maintain the clearance of the hydrants.

Legal Counsel Guinasso suggested the District set a date for the draft letter to be emailed to KGID. If it is ignored and it's not added to their agenda for the KGID Board to act on, then the District could initiate the first fine with a letter. When the hydrants get covered in snow, it puts

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the public at risk. Vice Chair Felton advised KGID's next Board Meeting is September 19<sup>th</sup> and the following meeting is October 17<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chair Felton made a motion to pursue the course that Legal Counsel has recommended, under the supervision of the Fire Chief, to have our Legal Counsel contact KGID's Legal Counsel as a first step.

Second: Trustee Murphy.

Motion approved 4-0.

## **11. District Divisions**

*Assistant Chief Bryce Cranch*

Chief Cranch announced division transfers from Wildland Fire & Fuels to Operations for: David Martland and Dustin Tremaine.

*Highlights:*

Captain Green retired

Orientation for new line staff on August 28<sup>th</sup>

Shane Gump will be leading the academy as the RTO

Structure fire on the Fourth of July

Marine 24 is on the water – Vice Chair Felton added, for the record, that people are very aware of the new fire boat and it has caught a lot of attention.

*Division Chief/FMO Keegan Schafer*

Chief Schafer reported new information that the USFS is cooperating with Wildland Fire & Fuels Division allowing our crews to go onto USFS land and build shaded fuel breaks around communities.

Trustee Johnson thanked Wildland Division Chief Schafer and the crews for the impressive work they completed in Glenbrook.

*Fire Inspector Kris Rowlett*

Inspector Rowlett advised that 41 Vacation Home Rental (VHR) inspections was actually not very many for the District, however July was a very busy month due to the Golf Tournament and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities. Inspector Garrison attended a Wildland Fire Investigator Class, and then got to put those skills to use at the recent Glenbrook fire.

Rowlett addressed Vice Chair Felton's question about if 68 projects is a lot. Rowlett explained that it is the building season right now and people are trying to get projects in before October 15<sup>th</sup>. Chief Lindgren clarified that the 68 projects are plan reviews for a remodel or

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redevelopment.

Tahoe Comicon will be held in September as the first public event at the Tahoe Blue Event Center.

*Administration Division Officer - Kate Warner*

ADO Warner discussed July being the biggest payroll week in the year - kudos to Payroll Specialist Labrado and Finance Manager Nolting.

Warner attended the first weekly conference call regarding the new partially self-insured insurance. There have only been 16 issues so far, and they were all resolved, except for one that is pending. The District has a spreadsheet for tracking purposes and to show the progress of each issue.

POOL/PACT recommends certain classes for orientation week and for the first time we were able to coordinate all of the classes during orientation week– kudos to HR Specialist McCarthy.

The District held a service for Engineer Nick Robidart at the Nevada Beach Pavilion on August 11<sup>th</sup>. ADO Warner acknowledged the District’s honor guard and our crews in their professionalism and support that day.

**12. Review of Monthly Fire District Activities.**

**No action will be taken.**

Fire Chief Scott Lindgren

Chief Lindgren also recognized Engineer Robidart’s memorial service. Lindgren expressed gratitude for the professionalism from the staff members, the coordination of the service and how our department came together that day.

Glenbrook Fire – Chief Lindgren is unable to release the information due to it being an ongoing investigation.

Sherwood Fire – Chief Lindgren advised that the District is close releasing the cause.

Regarding Chief Schafer’s report about working with the USFS, the District received a massive increase in the contract work with the forest service and one important thing we are pushing is the shaded fuel breaks. In the next couple of weeks the District is going to ask residents of the District, specifically residents of Skyland, to meet with us to inform them our plans. . Trustee Johnson offered to go door to door in Skyland and inform the residents.

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The District held a committee meeting on the Operations Save the Basin Helicopter Program Golf Tournament. Trustee Johnson and Trustee Noyes volunteered to assist with the planning of the golf tournament. Chief Lindgren spoke at a Truckee Fire Protection meeting, and they were very supportive of the helicopter program.

The District also had a successful meeting with the Principal of the high school, which has started to lose students because of the lack of student sports and vocational programs. There are currently only 6 high school seniors this year. The Principal advised the school is very supportive of putting a helicopter program at the school, as a vocational program for the students. The District is also interested in assisting with a fire explorer program, along with other opportunities for the youth.

**Public Comment:**

Elizabeth Lernhardt, resident of Skyland, requested an evacuation plan for the District. Chief Lindgren acknowledged Lernhardt's question and advised he was at a meeting with Incline Fire Protection District and Douglas County Sheriff's Office to discuss the evacuation plan. There is a lot of work to do, and a lot of collaboration, but the Wildland Fire & Fuels crews creating fuel breaks and routes are imperative to a good evacuation plan.

Vice Chair Felton acknowledged Chief Lindgren losing two friends from CalFire in the tragedy that occurred in southern California.

Meeting Adjourned: 16:43PM

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

**Submitted by:**

Amanda Keeton  
Fire Board Clerk