

**TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

Special Session

September 14, 2011

Those Present:

Chairperson Brad Dorton

Trustee Ann Grant

Trustee Kevin Kjer

Trustee Steve Seibel

Interim Fire Chief Van Ogami

Fire Marshal Mark Novak

Battalion Chief Dave Hekhuis

Battalion Chief Ben Sharit

Captain Tim Allison

Captain Jim Hardison

Captain Rich Nalder

Captain Chuck Salerno

Engineer Kevin Crebs

Engineer Bryce Cranch

FF/P Brad Petersen

Forester John Pickett

Fire Inspector Eric Guevin

Supervisor Keegan Schafer

Foreman T.C. Ghisletta

Administrative Aid Carrie Nolting

Administrative Assistant Kate Warner

Roy Clason

Guy LeFever

Patrick Atherton

1. Action Item: Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 pm by Chairman Brad Dorton.

2. Action Item: Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of allegiance was led by Interim Fire Chief Van Ogami.

3. Action Item: Roll call.

Trustee Brad Dorton, Trustee RJ Clason, Trustee Ann Grant, Trustee Kevin Kjer and Trustee Steve Seibel were all present.

4. Action Item: Public comment.

There was no comment.

5. Possible Action Item: Interviews for Fire Chief

Chairman Dorton addressed the Board and said that they all understand that this is an important decision and may very well be the most important decision they make during their time on the board and he knows that everyone has given it great thought and consideration.

He congratulated the six candidates and thanked them for submitting their applications and wished them good luck in the process.

He reviewed the format as follows:

Candidates have submitted their applications, resumes, PARS and their responses to a set of written questions. Each candidate will now be given a chance to respond to four (4) oral questions. The order was determined by a draw and will proceed as follows:

Fire Marshal Mark Novak
Captain Chuck Salerno
Captain Tim Allison
Captain Jim Hardison
Battalion Chief Ben Sharit
Battalion Chief Dave Hekhuis

- Each candidate will be read the same four questions, and will be given 20 minutes to respond to those questions. Candidates can request the question be re-read to them if they need to hear it again. Candidates can bring a pad and pen into the interview.
- Chief Ogami will serve as our timekeeper, announcing “5 minutes remaining “when appropriate. When the 20 minutes is up, each candidate will be asked if they have any additional comments or questions.
- For the sake of fairness and consistency, the Board Trustees are discouraged from asking any additional questions, however, if a Trustee feels compelled to ask a question, all candidates will be given an opportunity to address the same question.
- As each candidate completes their interview, they are welcome to take a seat in the room if they like.
- There will be no discussion in between candidate interviews.
- When all six interviews are complete, the Board will have discussion and the Chairman will entertain a motion.
- This is an “open meeting” and all candidates are permitted by law to remain in the meeting, however the Board does request that they “voluntarily” leave the room, and wait outside the court room until called in.

The Chairman, then asked the candidates to leave the room with the exception of the first candidate, Mark Novak. He clarified that after the interviews there will be a short break to allow the Trustees to review their notes and reminded the Board that there can be no discussion about the candidates between the members while on break.

If the Board does not feel that the candidates meet the requirements, there could be a motion to move the Fire Chief Selection process outside the organization. Trustee Grant will read the questions.

Candidate: Mark Novak, Fire Marshal

Q1. This will be a three part question.....

A. Please describe any relevant budget and planning experience you have had with the District, or elsewhere, that would be beneficial to the District in tough economic times.

Novak: Mr. Chairman and members of the Board, first of all, thank you for your time, I know this is an important decision, and I feel we have a good field of candidates here. Trustee Grant, thank you for your questions.

As you are familiar, I have been in the rank of Chief Officer for approximately the last five (5) years. During that time, I have been involved in the budgeting each year. Our former Fire Chief, Chief LeFever has been really strong in recognizing the importance of bringing along each team member in learning the budgeting process. He embraced the philosophy that we needed to have depth in budgeting in the organization at all times. To that end, I have been involved with the formulation of the budgets for the last several years. I have sat in Chief LeFever's office many an afternoon and gone thru the budgeting process.

In addition, my most "hands on" budgeting experience with in this organization would be in the Fire Safe Community Fund. I have been fortunate enough to have been intimately involved with that (fund) since its inception, so my budgeting experience began even before that budget existed. It started with determining what our future needs were, how we are going to fill those future needs as far as revenues and what would be the mechanism to make that happen. With that regard, I was involved in budget forecasting when we decided to go to the voters with the tax override. And that is an important part of budgeting, just as much as putting numbers into the budget forms, is forecasting out what the needs are; not just this year, but 3 years, 5 years and 30 years. So I think those experiences have well prepared me for the budgeting process.

B. With regard to the budget, please describe your understanding of what line items can be augmented to allow for a shortfall according to NRS 354.

Novak: If I understand that question correctly, within the budget you can augment, of course we have our seven (7) funds and within each of those funds, there are different line items. There are salaries, benefits, services/supplies and capital outlay. So within any one category you can augment, but it would require special approval to go outside of those. An example of that would be if we had a line item within service/supplies or vehicle maintenance and another line item for computer supplies or IT expenses; if we had an overrun in IT expenses we could augment from the vehicle maintenance budget. However, as a part of normal business, we would not be able to augment between services/supplies and salaries.

C. When preparing the yearly budget to the State of Nevada, can existing unreserved funds be expended in order to balance the budget? This is not to be confused with the reserve funds such as sick leave. Please explain your answer.

Novak: You could use your existing unreserved funds to balance the budget that would be coming from your ending fund balance; however that is a bad practice, because you are basically borrowing from the bank and you can only do that for so long as we all know that from our personal lives. We have been pretty careful throughout the years to make sure that we are looking toward the future and making sure that we maintain an adequate reserve and an adequate ending fund balance.

Q2. If selected for the Fire Chief position, state your:

Short term goals (first 100 days)

Novak: If selected to become the Fire Chief, I have given this concept quite a bit of thought, and I believe all the candidates have or they would not be applying. Anyone applying for this job, certainly not only wants to continue the great program that has been completed previously but also set a course in motion that will improve the organization. I don't think anybody has the desire to just "stay the course" and just do what it takes to get by. With that said, the first goal that I would have would be do complete a needs assessment and what I mean by that is to assess some of our areas and determine exactly what needs to be done.

So one area would be training, due to some conflicting priorities over the last several years, we haven't always been able to achieve everything in training that we would like to do; although, we have done a lot of great things with training. And so one of my first goals would be do a complete an assessment of the training program, or have the Assistant Chief of Operations actually conduct that in cooperation with the line personnel and determine what the "un served" training needs are. One of the goals that the Fire Chief is personally responsible for, and one of the organizational priorities is service to the community and employee safety. It would be a top goal to find out if we have any areas we are falling short with in training as it directly ties to firefighter safety and public safety.

Another short term goal would be to look at our Strategic Planning process and see if there is a need to get rid of that process or does it continue to serve its function. A little history here, when that process first began 10 -11 years ago, under the guidance of Chief Guy LeFever, we had a large amount of employee involvement. Over the last couple of years, partly due to budget constraints, there has been a trailing off of employee involvement and I think it's a good time to reinvigorate that process. For a lot of people that process has become a tactical plan, rather than a Strategic Plan and I think there are some big picture items that we need to be looking at that could be affecting this organization. Some of those may be future budget constraints, other issues such as consolidation, redistribution of taxes when the Legislature meets again in another year and a half; those types of things. We have done some work on that process, meeting with consultants to look at a different type of a process.

Another real important goal as Fire Chief would be to develop a personal relationship with every one of the employees; I believe I have that relationship. However, we all are pretty caught up with our jobs and I would make sure that I met with all the stations, all the shifts, and

let them understand my philosophy of running the organization and what my priorities are and get their feedback so that I can incorporate that as well as we move forward. That would be a very important part of my first 100 days.

Medium term goals (1-2 yrs)

Novak: One of our really big challenges, speaking organizationally...I think when you become Fire Chief, personal goals and organizational goals become one. Straight personal goals go out the window because your number one priority really is the organization. I think one of our huge challenges in the next 1-2 years is succession planning. There are a couple of aspects to that not only traditional succession planning, in determining who is going to be the next Captain, Battalion Chief. But, also we need to look at how we are going to staff the organization. We are running into a situation where the budget is obviously constrained, it is difficult; and potentially next year's budget will be equally difficult if not more so. However, we have this challenge with a lot of experience walking out the door, with potentially six (6) retirements this year. We need to think about how we will staff, and not defer the hiring; because one of my biggest concerns is if we defer that hiring too long: a.) the overtime will become a burden on the employees, and b.) I feel it is unhealthy for the organization when you have to hire too many in a short amount of time. We can lose a lot of quality control in the first year when that happens. So that succession planning, quality labor improvement would be some of my goals and looking at innovative ways to bring people on board, even if we do not have fully funded positions to gain experience. Programs such as apprentice programs, reserves programs and things of that nature, but it is important to get people in the door, have them learn the organization and get some experience under their belts.

Another priority is to get a home for the Zephyr Fire Crew and the Fuels Management program. As you are all aware, there are some severe constrains where they are currently at (on Logging Lane) and we need to fix that problem ex post haste.

Long term goals (3-5 yrs)

Novak: Once again, I think the Strategic Planning process will help us to flush those out and determine what we should be looking at. But looking out there at the future some of the things that I feel are important and we as an organization should be looking at would be, and we may not be able to comply with all these, but there are assessments we need to do of ourselves in that 3-5 year time frame. Some of those assessments would be in determining where we stand with NFPA 1710 Standards of Cover, determining where we are at with NIMS compliance, and determining what the best service delivery model long term.

We really need to look at the economy and determine if our service model is as efficient as it can be. In addition to that the long term goals succession planning is an on-going process.

Q3. This is a hypothetical question:

You, as the Fire Chief, are engaged in a discussion with the Assistant Chief and the Union

President. They are at opposite ends of the spectrum in their views on a topic, they are equally passionate in their positions, and a decision needs to be made. What methodology or process would you use to handle the situation?

Novak: My assumption is that the Assistant Chief has the management responsibility and the difficulty is between management and the union. Decision making and conflict management are two very important skills of management and those are things that I have had really good opportunities to learn about. I think one of the most important things is to make sure we are hearing both sides. Early in my career it was very easy to rush in, Chairman Dorton may remember there was a time when I was known to be fairly opinionated. It is fairly easy to rush into things and not get all sides of the story. And so I would make sure that we are all hearing each other's sides, what the differences in opinion are (not knowing the situation) and if it is something that could be compromised on; I would like to find where the common ground is and where the difference are. Sometimes what we find out is that we are not that far apart, but we are stuck on small things. So that kind of conflict resolution and team building is really important. That would be my base methodology make sure that everyone understands where the other person is coming from and sometimes it is as simple as acknowledging that I understand it is important to you, however this is where we need to be.

Understanding some of the personal bias that come to the table and why maybe there are some feelings involved there can help to resolve that. It sounds kind of silly, but I like to use white boards, and make grids on them to show everyone here is where we need to be, here are things that go into this decision, if we go this way decision, if we go that direction and grid it out.

However at the end of the day, if we can't come to resolution and it is something we need to move on, I am the Fire Chief and I will take the best information available and I am going to make the decision. Everyone needs to understand that's my job, and that is important for the organization to move forward to make timely decisions.

Q4. In closing, do you have any additional questions for the Board of Trustees or is there anything you would like to add?

Novak: First, I know that you have read a lot of written information about me and what I do want to reiterate, and I think that this speaks for all the candidates, none of us would be here if we were not sold out on supporting this organization. None of us have taken jobs with cross bugles with Chief Officer rank because it's more fun than riding the fire engine. All of us do it out of a sense of service to the community. That's why I am standing here and that is why the other guys will be standing here later on. I have been very thankful for the last five (5) years as Chief Officer, it has been extremely challenging, and it has been extremely hard. I speak for myself and all the guys coming after me, we do it because we love the community and we want to support the organization and make it as good as it can be. I truly believe that and I think that of the people who are applying, you cannot find a more dedicated group of people who are not only dedicated to this organization, but to this community. The other important thing is that we

all understand the community, we understand the dynamics of it, and some of us have learned those lessons with great difficulty, but it is extremely important.

As for myself, I have been given great opportunities, opportunities to do things that I never thought I would do. It has been a great ride and I am very appreciative of it. If selected Fire Chief, I anticipate more great challenges and I am confident we can do great things with the organization even in tough times. Personally, I think my record speaks for itself, I have had some pretty significant achievements in my career and I will not repeat them because you have them in our written documentation, but the Fuels Management program the fire prevention programs have been moved forward in leaps and bounds in short time frame. I won't say that is my personal effort, it was because of one of my strengths, which is my ability to build strong teams. It's the people who work for the organization who have allowed me to do those things.

I would like to say that the other guys applying, particularly those with experience as Chief Officers, I have worked with them closely and we had the preverbal blood, sweat and tears working through difficult problems; and whomever is selected I am extremely comfortable that, not only can I work with them personally, but that they can build a strong team and organization that can weather the storm that may be ahead of us and achieve the things that the community deserves. We have already done many, many great things and we are serving the community well, but I know we can build a strong team regardless of who is selected. Thank you very much for your time, I wish you well in your decision making and it is a tough position to be in.

Candidate: Captain Chuck Salerno

Q1. This will be a three part question.....

A. Please describe any relevant budget and planning experience you have had with the District, or elsewhere, that would be beneficial to the District in tough economic times.

Salerno: In terms of relevant budget experience, certainly you have had time to look over the Personal Assessment Report and the resume. The first thing that comes to mind is, I believe it was Question #8 in the written questions, that asked "tell us something about you that we don't already know" and I detailed my involvement with the church that my family attends in Carson City. I sit on the administration board and it is our job to do the business side of the church operations from budget planning, staffing, facilities and grounds, transportation and legal issues. It has given me an opportunity, in the last three years, to see another budget; not the fire department budget, not my personal budget - and to gain perspective in terms of how someone else operates. It is obviously not a governmental agency, it is a not-for-profit but we have had to deal with the declining economy and less revenue and the budget has been reduced. We have had to take measures to reduce some of the services. We actually had to restructure our staffing and let two full-time employees go. There is no question in my mind

that my experiences helped me to understand the budgeting process and prepare me for the position of fire chief.

B. With regard to the budget, please describe your understanding of what line items can be augmented to allow for a shortfall according to NRS 354.

Salerno: My short answer is I don't know. Anyone who has been around me for any length of time knows I like to use famous quotes, Albert Einstein has one he is famous for..."Don't bother memorizing something you can look up", so I honestly can't tell you. That is something that I could easily grab the Consolidated Budget and run through and get an answer on.

C. When preparing the yearly budget to the State of Nevada, can existing unreserved funds be expended in order to balance the budget? This is not to be confused with the reserve funds such as sick leave. Please explain your answer.

Salerno: I did have a chance to go through the budget extensively, and I think I have a pretty good feeling for how it operates. Based on what I read in the Consolidated Budget recently, my answer would be yes. It can be moved. I understand the confusion between the unreserved funds that are dedicated for something such as sick leave; those funds are only to be used for sick leave. But other unreserved funds can be used.

Q2. If selected for the Fire Chief position, state your:

Short term goals (first 100 days)

Salerno: Short term in the first 100 days, get with the remainder of staff, have a summit to determine the direction I see the department going and hear the direction the other staff members want to go. Work to gain a good understanding of what each of them are responsible for and the things they need to accomplish. As much as I would like to say I understand what Chief Novak does with the Fuels Program, I don't know all the in depth details, it would take a period of time to understand it so that I make sure that my goals mirror or allow for what he needs to accomplish.

Medium term goals (1-2 yrs)

Salerno: I would like to see the negotiations process change and the relations with the Union Local. I know that there are a variety of ways to negotiate contracts, the term "Interest-based Bargaining" could be used, and without going into a lot of detail, I think the process could be streamlined if both parties got together and made a point of determining resources in advance, agree upon whatever resources are available, if any, and then choose how to net those out.

Long term goals (3-5 yrs)

Salerno: A long term goal would be for me to determine, with our declining budget, the best way to operate in our district. With the budget shortfalls, we may have to revise how we operate and present services to the community. Inside those 3-5 years, with people leaving, there will be an opportunity to restructure things like staffing and stations. I can't give you an

exact plan, not knowing what the next three (3) years is going to bring but the idea would be to take the measures necessary, whether that is closing a station, building a new station or moving people around to determine the best way to service the community with the funds we have available.

Q3. This is a hypothetical question:

You, as the Fire Chief, are engaged in a discussion with the Assistant Chief and the Union President. They are at opposite ends of the spectrum in their views on a topic, they are equally passionate in their positions, and a decision needs to be made. What methodology or process would you use to handle the situation?

Salerno: A lot of factors that would come into play, with a Union President and a Assistant Chief talking it is likely an operational topic. If it is something operational, that Administration has a legal right to determine, let's say a level of service or a particular decision that lies in Administration. The Union obviously has an interest in the topic, but may not have a legal position to stand on. The decision would ultimately be up to me as the Fire Chief. Can I assume that I have both sides of the story, because one thing that is important to me is both sides of the story? I have two boys at home and at 12 and 10 it gets interesting at times. If I have discovered anything it is that I need to get both sides of the story when it comes to a situation. Whatever the situation; what got broken or who hit who, it doesn't matter. So, I am going to go on the assumption that I have had discussions with the Union President and the A/C and I have both sides of the story. At that point, if it's a decision that needs to be made and it is something that Administration can make unilaterally then I would go with the A/C.

If it happens to be an issue that the Union can take a stance on and have some kind of a legal say in, then I would have to give that consideration. There are certain issues that Administration can make unilaterally and some issues that need to have an agreement of both parties. As long as I follow the rules and do not try to do something that I am not legally bound to or not suppose to do, than that is the direction I would take. As far as methodology or process, get all the facts, process all the facts, hear both sides equally and make a decision.

Q4. In closing, do you have any additional questions for the Board of Trustees or is there anything you would like to add?

Salerno: Question, the fire chief application and the Strategic Plan differ in the "required" verse the "desired" qualifications, specifically must act in the positions of Captain and Battalion Chief.

Warner: The job description you received in the application is the latest update and when we go into the Strategic Plan process next year, all the job descriptions will have been updated and will be included.

Salerno: For the Board, when you choose your next Fire Chief, how much of an active role do you see yourselves playing in the operation of the fire district? Will you be active participants

in the daily operations? Do you see yourselves as maybe more of taking a step back and be support?

Chairman Dorton: I feel most of our responsibility is to the community and to ensure that they receive the service they deserve and also, the financial responsibility to get the most “bang for the buck” with community funds. One of my personal responsibilities is to ensure the safety of the firefighters, having been one and served at Tahoe Douglas. I feel that adequate staffing is essential for safety. So service and safety are number one. As far as the day to day operations, this Board and previous Boards have left it up the Fire Chief. Our former Chief was very good at handling the day-to-day and made the Board’s job very easy, they never really had to get involved with that. In the future that may change, possibly. As long as things run smoothly, there isn’t a need for the Board to get more involved.

Trustee Clason: The role of the Board is a governing body; we are not the technical experts. With the exception of the Chairman, none of the Trustees have the technical expertise to be effective in dictating what you do or what your colleagues do. It is best not to micro manage what the management is doing. Unless there is an unusual situation happening, where there is a significant difference of opinion in the operations then it may be appropriate to intervene where necessary, but as a rule the operations need to run by the management.

Trustee Grant agreed that the Board does not need to micro manage.

Trustee Seibel added that if the Board has done their job in hiring the best candidate for the position of Fire Chief, then we trust him to do that job and the Board does not need to micro manage.

Trustee Kjer interjected that the Board’s responsibility is to make sure the District is well run.

Salerno: Big decision being made today, I know it is not taken lightly and the Board has put a lot of thought and work into it as have the candidates, I hope that my being here, that every guy being here demonstrates that we are taking the time to educate, train and prepare ourselves so that when the time in the future when leadership roles do come available, you will have great people to draw from. I am grateful to be part of the process. Thank you.

Candidate: Captain Tim Allison

1. This will be a three part question.....
 - A. Please describe any relevant budget and planning experience you have had with the District, or elsewhere, that would be beneficial to the District in tough economic times.

Allison: Relevant experience so far is limited as a Captain; my primary experience is through the Strategic Planning process. I have been involved in the Strategic Plan for the last ten (10)

years and have been the coordinator; coordinating the three (3) committees - financial resources, human resources and physical resources, and putting the plan together with Kate, Carrie and the Fire Chief.

Through my experience with my Union work I have served on the Negotiations Committee for 2 or 3 terms, and have been President of the association for the last four (4) years. Our Fire Chief LeFever was very gracious and always had an open door when you had a budget question. Anything to do with budgets he would take the time to teach you what you needed to learn. He always addressed budget questions how they work, where our revenue comes from and how the budget is used as a planning tool in concert with the Strategic Plan to accomplish our mission to provide services to this community.

B. With regard to the budget, please describe your understanding of what line items can be augmented to allow for a shortfall according to NRS 354.

Allison: I believe that is when you have received reduced revenues, which has been happening to us for the past 5-6 years now or OT costs for strike teams from the General Fund. The General Fund is the primary operating fund for the fire district where we pay the majority of our wages and salaries, and how we provide our service and also through the Ambulance Enterprise Fund. If you have cost overruns in your General Fund, there are timelines towards the end of the fiscal year where, if you need to, you can augment the budget. There is a process you must go through the State, it has to be approved by the State to ensure you have the proper ending balances. The State law requires that, I believe 8% of your General Fund, one month's worth of revenue, remains in your budget at the end of the fiscal year. So you can augment the budget in order to meet that requirement.

C. When preparing the yearly budget to the State of Nevada, can existing unreserved funds be expended in order to balance the budget? This is not to be confused with the reserve funds such as sick leave. Please explain your answer.

Allison: I believe the question is talking about the beginning and ending fund balances, and unreserved funds are funds that are not reserved for other expenses for example the sick leave fund and the capital projects funds. Those funds are reserved for specific purposes and the money in there, cannot be used for other purposes. Those funds cannot be used to balance the budget, cannot move them from one fund to another. You can within the funds, the General and Ambulance funds but not the reserved funds.

Yes, the unreserved can be used to augment the budget as long as you follow the rules and the laws that apply to changing money within budgets and not taking money from certain budgets like capital projects and health insurance trust funds.

Q2. If selected for the Fire Chief position, state your:

Short term goals (first 100 days)

Allison: Due to the time of year it is, the first 100 days, several things are about to happen. We will need to renew our health insurance and we will begin another negotiations process, the current contract between the association and the fire district will expire and the negotiation process will begin in February. And, planning will need to begin for the next fiscal budget. We will get our first numbers in February from the State.

So my short term goals would be the budget, negotiations and first, the health insurance, in November. Also, we are projected to loose, I think another seven (7) employees between now and February due to retirements starting with Fire Chief LeFever. There are about 35-36 people on the line right now and I anticipate promotions to Chief Officer/Battalion Chief positions which will take us down to 30 or 29 on the floor and trying to staff with 11-12 people is going to be difficult and taxing to the people left on the floor. We will definitely need to look at if it is time to hire? That will require us to monitor all these other things; health insurance costs and how our numbers look from the State. I don't think we can consider hiring anyone until we get those first set of numbers from the State. During that time we will need to monitor our revenues, especially the CTX as that has been our major shortfall in the last few years and where revenues are falling short of projections. It will almost be a day-to-day thing. We will need to be very careful in how we are going to decide whether we are going to keep staffing, how many people we are going to staff; there will be a lot of things to look at with that respect.

Medium term goals (1-2 yrs)

Allison: As will be determined in my first 100 day goals, the medium term goals will continue to focus on revenues. How do we deal with our revenues if they continue to fall? How do we staff? How do we perform our mission? How do we take care of our external and internal customers and how do we do our jobs with falling revenues? It is going to be very difficult; however there are other ways, as I have listed to generate revenues, besides the tax revenues. As far as tax changes, I believe prior to the 2005 Legislature we had a cap of .18, but before we had the ability to levy, to reduce or increase the taxes to absorb issues. I believe that was taken away with those changes in 2005. Now it is primary an ad valorem source of revenue as compared to a primary CTX source of revenue, that is economy driven and they fluctuate wildly as we have seen in the last few years. It is not very dependable under the current structure. It is difficult to plan for revenues particularly with CTX. With the ad valorem it was always money in the bank so to speak. It was about \$250,000 a year the ad valorem would go up, but over the last 4-5 years, our ad valorem, our assessed valuations have dropped over a million dollars but we still gained \$45,000 in ad valorem revenues. We need to see some stabilization in the housing market which will equate to jobs, housing market/real estate stabilization, retirees spending money and companies hiring.

Long term goals (3-5 yrs).

Allison: We need to look at other ways to generate revenue, Captain Hardison and other employees are working on an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) as we speak, Safer Grants have been extended until 2016, we have to be careful with those there are certain rules that apply to them, though they have relaxed quite a bit as far as who is eligible, how you can use that money, but you have to be careful with any non-permanent source of revenue. Anything that is temporary, 1 year, 3 years even 4 years in this case, will we be out of this financial crisis by then? I certainly hope so. I think Safer Grants are something we should at least look into as well as other sources of revenue like fee for service and plan checking. Some little things we could do that would be good morale boosters would be to use administrative staff to augment staffing, they are still certified. We can examine our automatic and mutual aid agreements, how we provide our service and how we help each other. A constant analysis of overtime verses hiring will be needed.

Q3. This is a hypothetical question:

You, as the Fire Chief, are engaged in a discussion with the Assistant Chief and the Union President. They are at opposite ends of the spectrum in their views on a topic, they are equally passionate in their positions, and a decision needs to be made. What methodology or process would you use to handle the situation?

Allison: Where is the common ground, what can we agree on? Have we identified the problem, what information do we have, are we on the same page, are we talking about the same thing, do we have the same information? Work towards a resolution, a compromise to try for a win-win; but sometimes it does not work that way and it is a loose-loose. Obviously you want to work towards the best solution for the tax payers, the visitors to our District; the people we protect and our employees. Find common ground, review the things we agree on and then look at and analyze the smaller parts and move from there. Do we need some other expert advice; one side may not be sure what they are talking about or may not have all the information. That's why it is so important for us to communicate and be able to share information; particularly when you are talking about labor and relations. That's always worked for me. I have always tried to, whenever I visited the Fire Chief's office as the Union President in my official capacity; I always try to come in with alternatives, not with just questions or demands. Here's something I think we can do that will accomplish both our goals.

Q4. In closing, do you have any additional questions for the Board of Trustees or is there anything you would like to add?

Allison: As I said, thank you, I am very pleased that the Board is open to promoting from within, as long as I have worked here the Board as always supported that and provided opportunities to those employees who are qualified to move into those positions as they become available. I hope that is something we can continue in the future. Thank you very much for the opportunity, I am glad the Board is taking the time to listen to the folks here first, before making any other decisions.

Candidate: Captain Jim Hardison

1. This will be a three part question.....

A. Please describe any relevant budget and planning experience you have had with the District, or elsewhere, that would be beneficial to the District in tough economic times.

Hardison: Thank you, it is a pleasure to be here and I appreciate it. My personal experience with the Local 2441, because knowing the budget has helped us with contract negotiations, and those of us with the Union like to do our homework. We study the contract really well and how it relates to the budget. We have a good understanding of the budget so when we are asking for money, we know that it's there. When we are talking about health insurance, we need to know what is going on with that part of the budget.

My college degree was heavily weighted in finance and budget. We prepared budgets for fictional companies and I prepared the Briggs & Stratton budget as my project. We had to find a company that was traded on the stock market, so I had a list of companies I was interested in, went out to my garage and there was my lawnmower Briggs & Stratton, so that's who I did my budget on.

I also in one of my volunteer responsibilities, I am a Chief Officer the Smith Valley Fire Protection District, and I was Fire Chief there for seven (7) years and was very involved with the budget. It is a fire district very similar to ours except that it is a volunteer response.

B. With regard to the budget, please describe your understanding of what line items can be augmented to allow for a shortfall according to NRS 354.

Hardison: I would like to be a little better versed in this, but I do know that if you are going to move things around on your budget, you must justify that and you cannot overspend your budget, that is against state law and when it comes time for the end of year audit you must show justification for everything you do.

C. When preparing the yearly budget to the State of Nevada, can existing unreserved funds be expended in order to balance the budget? This is not to be confused with the reserve funds such as sick leave. Please explain your answer.

Hardison: Yes, they can but it requires documentation back and forth with the State Treasurer to come to the final budget. It has to be documented and show cause.

Q2. If selected for the Fire Chief position, state your:

Short term goals (first 100 days)

Hardison: First thing I would need to do would be to get my feet on the ground, establish my team, and set up some communication with all the stake holders. As Fire Chief, I would start with the line personnel, and I would make the time to visit with all the stations and all the crews. They need to know that their new leader is ready to move forward, and will have their backs and watch out for their best interests as well as the best interests of the tax payers in the District.

Establish my lines of communication with the people on the line, because they are the people who do what we do, and without the firefighters, we would not be able to provide any services. That would be my most important goal in my first days. They need to understand that I have an open door policy, they can have my cell phone number call me any time, let's work together. Because things are different now, we are staffing shorter than we ever have, we are having budget issues, and strong leadership is really critical right now. You can't do anything without establishing the lines of communication.

Medium term goals (1-2 yrs)

Hardison: We are coming into the budget season real soon. I would like to take our Strategic Plan and rewrite it from the ground up. It is an older document, it has gotten too big. People are having trouble working with it. It is cumbersome if you will. So I would establish a couple staff people to take that up, I would be actively involved with it, the Fire Chief needs to be involved as it is our plan for the future. We would solicit input from all the members within the organization from the Board to the line firefighters. We would make it a very concise and to the point document which would briefly state where we are now and where we want to be in the future. One thing we are going to have to do with that document is make plans for continued shortfalls. Its reality, we've either been deficit spending, or cutting wages or reducing staffing for 5-6 years now, so it is not a secret that revenue is going down. So we owe it to our tax payers, our citizens and people we protect, to have a plan if the budget continues to go the way it has. We are beyond the point of telling the people you (the Board) represent, we didn't see it coming. We've seen it coming, it is here, so the Strategic Plan would need to have contingency plans for, maybe we can only afford 10 people on staff per day, 9 people, and 8 people. How is that going to look, how will we provide the best service and still be able to do that?

Long term goals (3-5 yrs).

Hardison: Long term goal would be employee development, we have a huge turnover right now, and the last retirement celebration had I think 270 years of experience going out the door. And by the end of this year, we will have over 100 years of experience going out the door. We are putting people in the right seat on engines, who have been working here in this District for less than five (5) years. And you have probably heard it before, but I will repeat it, the Captain's position is the most important position within the organization and we need to really step up our training, development and education plan to get those people ready. That will require someone dedicated to training, perhaps a Battalion Chief whose major responsibility would be training and education. I have a lot of ideas about that, that don't fit in this forum. We need to be working with other organizations, and getting the state Fire Marshal involved because we are already behind the curve. We are way behind the curve in getting people out there and training them to do it right.

Q3. This is a hypothetical question:

You, as the Fire Chief, are engaged in a discussion with the Assistant Chief and the Union President. They are at opposite ends of the spectrum in their views on a topic, they are equally passionate in their positions, and a decision needs to be made. What methodology or process would you use to handle the situation?

Hardison: I will preface this by saying that conflict is not something to be avoided especially in adult discussions, conflict is good. You have two opposing views, and you work it out and at the end of the conflict your organization moves forward because of that conflict.

So I'd offer them discussion, give each person an opportunity to share their view, because I as the Fire Chief, if I had any questions, I'd ask them because I may need clarification in my own mind. Then I would encourage discussion between the two. If they are passionate about it that's good, because that means that they care. I don't want people in there who are not passionate. Find out what is good about each idea and each position get some discussion going on how to come to terms.

That's what the Fire Chief does, he resolves conflicts, sometimes on a daily basis and that is not something you shirk away from. You welcome conflicts as an opportunity to move the organization forward. The Fire Chief has got to be a team leader. New Chief Officers, new Company Officers and new firefighters need someone who can step into the middle of a conflict and let people know that he is the leader and he's going to bring the group together and look for a solution and be always focused on what is good for the organization. I found that over the years, if you keep that in mind then you are going to do the right thing. Keep focused on what is good for the organization; don't get side tracked on personalities and emotions and things like that. Put on the Fire Chief hat and say this is where we are going with this and this is how do we are going to get there.

Q4. In closing, do you have any additional questions for the Board of Trustees or is there anything you would like to add?

Hardison: You have read my resume; I am not one for verbiage, language yes, verbiage no. This is a great opportunity for the organization to pick the new leader and move it forward. Challenging times, like I said things are different now, but a lot of things are the same. We still have a bunch of great people, who love working here, love being here, and we work together well. That's good. Let's pick the Fire Chief that's going to be the strong leader that we need right now, and whomever it ends up being, I intend to be part of his team. I appreciate the opportunity to be here. Thank you.

Candidate: Battalion Chief Ben Sharit

Q1. This will be a three part question.....

A. Please describe any relevant budget and planning experience you have had with the District, or elsewhere, that would be beneficial to the District in tough economic times.

Sharit: Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today, I appreciate it. My planning and budget experience has become pretty extensive over the last 4 ½ years, as Battalion Chief for the Fire District. At first, I started with working beside Chief LeFever watching as he developed it. Then, we started with the audit, so I was slowly starting to get exposed my first year as we went through the budget process. Then, I was assigned the comprehensive budget which typically follows the audit and since then, I have grabbed it and ran with it. I really enjoy it. It is a great experience. It has really exposed me to the nuts and bolts (of the budget). I appreciate Chief LeFever's trust in me. That first year the comprehensive budget was quite intense for me, because you have to take the audit itself as a reflection of our budget. The budget is our plan; the audit shows us how it turned out. We use the comprehensive budget to combine the audit information with the budget information into a document that anyone in the public, anyone in our Fire District can understand our budget with.

I have moved forward with that to the point now that I have been watching every month, tracking our revenue; I track our CTX, I track Ad Valorem, and I track the interest. I have also had a lot of opportunities as a Battalion Chief, in the budget arena and also as an Administrative Assistant after Barbara Riboli retired. I got to see the inside, first hand of running payroll, accounts payable, the banks, and the checkbooks. I have been very lucky and I have the time right now in my life, with my wife and I at home in an empty nest. She was very supportive of the situation; so I ran with it, I soaked it up and I really enjoyed it. I think the best thing this Board and the Fire Chief has ever done was to hire an Administrative Assistant and Aid because those jobs in themselves are overwhelming. I actually really enjoyed working on the budget itself. The last two years, the Chief said you are going to do your own budget and then we contrasted and compared it to the budget we actually turned into the state. Every opportunity I had to be involved and to work with it, he gave to me.

B. With regard to the budget, please describe your understanding of what line items can be augmented to allow for a shortfall according to NRS 354.

Sharit: Budget augmentation typically occurs when your revenue stream is less than your projections were, or when your expenditures were higher. We just went through budget augmentation this last fiscal year, in the Special Services Fund because of grants and Fire Safe Community Fund because we had strike teams go out so we had to cover those expenses of the Zephyr Crew even though we did not have the revenue in yet from the fires themselves. So you can only augment within a budget, and only between four line items; salaries and wages, capital outlay, employee benefits and services/supplies. As you watch and you track the revenue and expenditures on a monthly basis, you see and be able to forecast that you are going to have this situation occur sometime in May. The monthly financials come over from David & Johnson, and you can see what is coming at you. You need to notify the Board, and Board will have to approve a budget augmentation by a resolution. You also have to notify the public with a public notice in the newspaper publicizing that you will be having a budget augmentation. Budget documents must be sent to the State of Nevada, Department of Taxation by the close of the fiscal year. When I saw that we were going to need to do that this year, I jumped right on it as I knew it would be a good thing to watch.

C. When preparing the yearly budget to the State of Nevada, can existing unreserved funds be expended in order to balance the budget? This is not to be confused with the reserve funds such as sick leave. Please explain your answer.

Sharit: Yes, my understanding is that you can spend unreserved funds to balance your budget, but you have to be careful when you spend those funds, because typically unreserved funds are planned for something in the future. For example, the capital project fund, has unreserved funds in there that appear pretty large, but you have to look to the Strategic Plan and see what those funds are being reserved for. Actually you can spend those funds, but you have to have a revenue replacement plan for them because down the road you may need to buy a fire engine, or fix a fire station.

Sick leave, I believe is actually considered “reserved” funds because it is based on how many people we expect to retire that year, which in this current budget right now, we are going to have quite a few.

Q2. If selected for the Fire Chief position, state your

Short term goals (first 100 days)

Sharit: Short term, first 100 days, obviously you have to set up your staff, your administrative team, identify with them your main priorities. Select staffs, sit down with your Board, and understand the budget as financial stability is the #1 priority. I’ve been tracking it (the budget) so closely for the last four (4) years, I don’t want to say it will be easy, we are going through a

difficult time, but I am on top of that and understand the budget. That's the first 100 days right there. You have to meet with all your outside agencies, your external customers, other fire chiefs and Board to discuss your plans and your priorities and your vision to build those relationships.

Medium term goals (1-2 yrs)

Sharit: The 1-2 years will be focused on the financial stability of the District and planning for the budget. If we have another shortfall like we just went through, forecasted for our next fiscal year we are going to have to have a plan in place and that would be my priority the first year - stability. We are going to have between 7-8 retirements this year. That attrition can help us absorb a budget loss, but at the same time how are we going to provide service to our residents and visitors.

Another priority would be a focus on personnel development, we have a younger department. I started here 26 years ago in 1985, now there are five of us left from that original group. So on one hand you can say that we have lost a lot of experience at the same time you have the ability to develop and build a really good foundation for a fire district going forward with the personnel we have. They are young, energized they have a wealth of ideas, experience and education. I would take the time to sit down and meet with each one of them to identify their values, and do they meet the values of this fire district and where do they see themselves in long term planning. I am leading to succession planning and I would do that right away. You do not want to miss that opportunity to make a plan for their future in the fire district. You have the ability to build a foundation, and move this district which is a great department higher up the ladder into the future.

Long term goals (3-5 yrs).

Sharit: Long term goals, I talked about succession planning, and the Strategic plan process will also be a part of that. Through my education, through my college education, I have been exposed to a little different strategic planning than we have used here in the past. What we have has been great. We have developed a strategic plan that shows anybody what our plan is and where we're moving forward. But today, in our economy now and the situations we are faced with things that are changing so quickly and so dynamically. The process that I have in mind would be on a quarterly-type basis and more involvement. Meet with all the employees and gather what their plans are and their input as to what they see as the future of the fire district. Get them to participate in our strategic planning process on a quarterly basis. And that includes all our stake holders; not just the firefighters, the administrative staff, fuels crew, board and residents; we are all going to make a plan. It's ownership. The employees we have now came into the fire service, working with a lot of senior firefighters who are now retiring. They came into their department, now it's going to theirs; they are going to define the future. I want to lead them through that. The opportunity is here, to take a great fire district, faced with the difficult economic times around, and look forward.

Back to short term goals, I want to add to complete the revisions on the policies and procedures. We definitely need that.

Q3. This is a hypothetical question:

You, as the Fire Chief, are engaged in a discussion with the Assistant Chief and the Union President. They are at opposite ends of the spectrum in their views on a topic, they are equally passionate in their positions, and a decision needs to be made. What methodology or process would you use to handle the situation?

As part of the conflict resolution, we would go ahead and sit down and come up with solutions; the three of us, what are the ideas, what are the solutions. If they can't come to an agreement on one of those solutions, you as the Fire Chief will have to select the solution and implement it; and when they leave your office, they may not agree with it but you have their support. We have been through this before in my career. Especially as the supervisor, or Fire Chief you will need to continue to monitor the outcome of that situation, to see that the solution is in fact working. I think most of the time; people just need to be treated fairly and heard out. In the end you have to make a decision, you have to move forward with a decision that is in the best interest of the Fire District and the residents and the employees. Does the solution serve the purpose of the District, not one person's personal viewpoint or another's? This is conflict resolution which I have learned as a result of our POOL/PACT training.

Q4. In closing, do you have any additional questions for the Board of Trustees or is there anything you would like to add?

Sharit: Thank you very much for this opportunity today, for taking the time, your time to set this up and allow us to get through this process. I was hired in 1985, and I am very proud to be a firefighter here, the fire service itself is my life. I have always worked hard with every position put in front of me and I have made mistakes. I guess you call it experience or maturity, but the key point is that I have learned from those mistakes. Some things that I have learned in the last decade of my life are to ask for help, to seek out the answers that I do not have and to ask others to participate. I am proud to work here. Every time I am promoted, it is because I like to be challenged. I like the opportunity to do better and make this organization a better place. The Fire District is a great employer; I do not think of it as a job, I never have. It's a career, it's fun, it's an honor to serve people and work as a family together. The firefighters in this room and the District are some of the best in the country. It has always been my goal to work hard and make sure they have every tool and opportunity possible. And they have done the same thing for me.

My family understands the lifestyle, the commitment we have here, and I understand. It is not just 10 days a month that you work here, or 40 hours per week it is a 100% commitment. Like I said earlier, we have an opportunity for this Fire District to move forward, into the most difficult economic times we have ever experienced. We have the ability; I have the ability, to work with this team, to bring them forward into the future. There are going to be ups and

downs, there are going to be negotiations, there are going to be disagreements, but they will have ownership and trust. If we move forward as a team, we can do this. If you had told me five (5) years ago that we were going to have the experiences we have had in the last five (5) years, I would have thought that's not possible. We've always had upward mobile movement; we've always had good economies. Now we are getting into a situation, depending on the leadership of this District, it can affect it negatively or positively. I myself, most everyone knows me in this room, I am a people person. I like talking to people, finding out what their needs are and working with them. And if I can help them to have a better lifestyle, the root of that same thought process is inside of me, because I am a firefighter, we change the outcomes. I heard a Chief say that one time at a conference. Firefighters make a difference because they change the outcome of a situation, they serve others, and they work together.

I love the job that I do right now as Battalion Chief, I love working with the newer people, with all the employees of the Fire District, because they all have a specific drive and value set but in the end we all want to help others and take care of ourselves as a team.

You've got some really good candidates here, some of the most experienced and capable people have come through here tonight. And I think these folks who have come before you are great, and if you select anyone of them as your next Fire Chief I think you will have done a great job and I would be a happy employee and continue to work as a Battalion Chief. Or, if you give me the opportunity to be the next Fire Chief, I will devote myself, just as I have done my entire career to do the best job possible for this Fire District, the residents and the firefighters within this District. I really think I have the education, experience, the knowledge and the dedication to go forward and take on this challenge. Work as hard as I can, dedicate as much time as needed, to carry this Fire District into the future and continue to have a great fire department with good employees, no matter what the economy or what the situation is. Thank you for your time tonight and this opportunity.

Candidate: Battalion Chief David Hekhuis

Q1. This will be a three part question.....

A. Please describe any relevant budget and planning experience you have had with the District, or elsewhere, that would be beneficial to the District in tough economic times.

Hekhuis: We are here now, in tough times, this last fiscal year we came upon a short fall, one from a benefit, medical insurance and one from an approaching \$500,000 – \$600,000 shortfall for the current fiscal year we are in. To adjust for that budget shortfall, I designed a new operational plan, which pretty much as the first time our general operational plan had been changed in the last 20 years. This plan consisted of changing how we respond to emergencies, how many employees we have on duty while maintaining our emergency response times as well as our district coverage. Our District is long and lean, and there are areas in our District

that can take quite a bit of time to get to if you don't have a station staffed. In this process, it provided staff with the flexibility to adjust daily staffing on short notice, basically within 12 - 24 hours you could adjust accordingly. This change took our staffing range from 10 - 12 positions, and allowed us to make our decisions on time of year, since we are a seasonal District, and we have peak call volume times such as the 4th of July, other holidays where we can easily increase staff without changing our structure. Other times, like November, and pre-holiday periods we can go lean and adjust accordingly. With this change, we were able to adjust during the April, May and June period, and negotiate changes with the Union contract that addressed the shortfall.

B. With regard to the budget, please describe your understanding of what line items can be augmented to allow for a shortfall according to NRS 354.

Hekhuis: I am not currently in a position to work with the budget on a daily basis, I do have familiarity with it, I do have budget knowledge. I know that the budget can be augmented, for example, if there is a grant item that we need to front money on and will get paid back for, I know that we can augment the budget because that money can be returned. It (grant funds) should be budgeted on the front end of the budget year but sometimes things come up and opportunities arise where we can acquire equipment and such and later get that money reimbursed.

C. When preparing the yearly budget to the State of Nevada, can existing unreserved funds be expended in order to balance the budget? This is not to be confused with the reserve funds such as sick leave. Please explain your answer.

Hekhuis: If you have any fund balance moneys, I believe you can apply that going forward to pay for your budget plan for the next year. I don't believe it would be a good practice to expend any monies in reserves for your day to day operating costs. I believe that would be a major shortfall in your planning process. I am a quick study at learning things and picking things up quickly. We have a year round accountant, and our former Fire Chief who is on contract to give advice moving forward for the next year, and we have an auditor in every summer, an admin who is very well versed as well as as my co-Chiefs who have worked on the budget more than I have. So I may not have the exact answers, but I am able to find them out quickly and be able to stay within the parameters of the NRS laws and produce a solid budget.

Q2. If selected for the Fire Chief position, state your

Short term goals (first 100 days)

Hekhuis: First off, get my bearings as to where we are at with the current budget; I have a pretty good idea, as I worked on portions of the budget, so I feel I have a pretty good handle on funds coming in and what's going out. To get my feet on the ground with exactly where the books are and start to form my management team. Determine how, based on the tax revenues coming in and how the economy is, are we seeing any clear signs of improvements or if it is

faltering, I can build a staff that will be flexible to augment when times are good and stay lean when the times are lean.

Medium term goals (1-2 yrs)

Hekhuis: Another short term goal, with another nine retirements within the next 2 weeks – 6 months, we will have to put some effort into deciding how many positions we need to fill, if we are going to fill them, what timeframe we will fill them in, how we are going to pay for that and get a hiring process in place. Options to hire could be to laterally hire in firefighter/paramedics who are already trained could be fairly quick, or could we conduct a full blown hiring process which could take longer to provide more training etc. or it could be hiring Crew members that we have sponsored through paramedic school. So there are a variety of ways we can approach the hiring process and we are going to need to deal with that in the first 100 days.

Medium term goals, 1-2 years would be to have a solid management team in place by then, and also have a long term goal and a better snap shot of long term financial projections and firm up where we will be with personnel numbers. The size of the staff commiserates with the size of the line personnel. So, staff should be as lean as we are requiring the line to be and staff should not increase until we are in a position to increase line as well.

Long term goals (3-5 yrs).

Hekhuis: Three – five years have the District on a sound financial footing; streamline the hiring and promotional process where it can be picked up by the next management team without needing to recreate the wheel, and enable them to just hit the ground running. It is hard to set 3-5 year goals with the current financial and world situation. Our assessed valuation in the District has dropped 150 million dollars; our CTX revenue has dropped over \$700,000; our population has dropped from 6600 to 4500 full time residents. I think things have leveled off and I have guarded reason to be optimistic that the economy is improving. At this point I am just looking to provide the services to the tax payers and keep a solid delivery service the leaner we get.

Q3. This is a hypothetical question:

You, as the Fire Chief, are engaged in a discussion with the Assistant Chief and the Union President. They are at opposite ends of the spectrum in their views on a topic, they are equally passionate in their positions, and a decision needs to be made. What methodology or process would you use to handle the situation?

Hekhuis: One thing I have learned in my experience moving from a line person, such as a firefighter to a captain and then into a management position as a Chief Officer is that on an emergency situation you must make a quick, firm and informed decision. Time is of the essence when you are mitigating an emergency. But a question regarding philosophies or views, it is best not to make a quick decision, but to sit back and take in all the information. I would consider consulting with the Assistant Chief and Union President alone, so that they could feel more free, sometimes there is an issue between Chief Officers and line personnel to

expressing their unabridged editions. I would look into my background and experience, as most of the fire service issues are not new – it's have been there and have done that, possibly here or possibly elsewhere. I have pretty wide experience coming from a large municipal fire department as well as working in the private sector and most of the issues that come up have happened before and have had solutions before for better or worse.

I think the best methodology would be to get the full picture, get all the facts, draw on my knowledge and experience and make a decision that is in the best interest of the Fire District, the community and the personnel.

Q4. In closing, do you have any additional questions for the Board of Trustees or is there anything you would like to add?

Hekhuis: I would like to thank you for the opportunity to apply for this position; I know you will make a wise decision. I know you have a tough decision in front of you, because in my opinion you have a field of well qualified individuals. Like I said I do not have all the experience in dealing directly with the budget, but in the projects I have been assigned they have all come in under budget and have benefitted the District greatly, in my opinion. And, I think I would do a good job as your Fire Chief. Thank you.

Chairperson Dorton announced a 10 minute break to reconvene at 6:10 pm.

At 6:10 pm, the Chairman resumed the meeting and read a suggested motion, and then opened the floor for discussion.

Trustee Clason expressed concern about the language with a specific reference to contract negotiations. He felt the actual motion could be simplified and that the appointment of the Chief had nothing to do with contract negotiations.

Trustee Grant stated that the Board could not appoint a Chief without some agreed contract compensation.

Trustee Seibel reiterated that the Board was selecting the Chief tonight and appointing on the 21st.

It was clarified that the Board hires and negotiates the Fire Chief and his contract. Then it is the Fire Chief's responsibility to negotiate contacts with all the Chief Officers and brings those to the Board for approval.

Trustees Seibel and Clason volunteered to negotiate the Fire Chief contract, and Trustee Seibel suggested that Chief LeFever assist with that process.

Chairman opened the floor for discussions.... Trustee Kjer lead off with how impressed he was with the candidate packets, our District has some really great people and the candidates should be commended. It was really nice to read the packets and see the experience in the District from all points of view. He added that he was happy we decided to go internal.

Trustee Seibel agreed, and added that reading the written questions was impressive, but the oral questions way over shadowed the written material. He was very impressed with the oral presentations.

Trustee Grant said that she appreciated all the effort and time that went into preparing for the packets; they were well written and clearly well thought out. She complimented the candidates on their responses to the oral questions as well.

Trustee Clason told the candidates that he learned so much about each of them through this process that he didn't know from sitting in Board Meetings with them the last three (3) years. And regardless of who is appointed Chief, he thought it would be helpful for the new Chief to review all the packets as they all had great ideas about the future and how to improve things going forward from succession planning, simplifying the strategic planning process, looking at potential reserve-type forces and different uses overtime for the fuels team, mending relationships with the bigger employers in the district-especially at Stateline.

Chairman Dorton concluded that the packets were very impressive, he gave credit to the candidates and former Fire Chief Guy LeFever who clearly did an excellent job in succession planning and previous Boards who through the negotiation process have allowed education to be important and we have all benefited from it. It is a credit to our organization and is apparent in these six (6) candidates.

Trustee Grant said that this selection process was especially beneficial to her as a new Board Trustee, reading the PARs and written responses and getting to know the candidates.

Chairman Dorton requested discussion on candidate attributes. Trustee Kjer was very impressed with all six (6), but felt that two (2) candidates stood out with a combination of their sense of team, their confidence and their experience. Currently the Fire Chief's position has a very budget driven position which requires specific budgetary knowledge and team building, and Chiefs Novak and Sharit stand out because of their experience and sense of team, also appear very confident and comfortable approaching the role of Fire Chief.

Trustee Grant concurred that it is a matter of experience for now, but said we also have great candidates here for down the line. The great thing about this process is it identified the potential for greater things within the organization.

Trustee Clason who said he too was very impressed with the written submissions and the oral responses, in particular Ben Sharit's knowledge of the budget process and the intricacies of

working with the State and the submissions, it is a complicated process. It is great that he has had the opportunity to serve as Chief LeFever's point man for a fair amount of time. It is very helpful. He said he came into the meeting having read the written applications with preconceived notions, but having heard the oral responses, Ben is a particularly strong candidate, at this time, to take over where the Chief left off and make improvements going forward with the help of others. Again, the entire Q & A was really strong, he pointed out Candidate Allison's background and candor in the written response and oral Q & A was strong. This provides us with a chance to see who you are and where you are in your thinking process.

Trustee Seibel concurred with the other Trustees, he said the oral questions supported his decision as to who he would like to see take this position. Everyone did a great job and it is extremely impressive reading all the packets and then hearing the oral responses.

Chairman Dorton thanked everyone for their participation and said he felt Chief Novak and Sharit were, in his opinion the front runners. He acknowledged that it is a difficult process and appreciated the candidates.

No more discussion or public comment was added.

Trustee Clason moved that the Board select Ben Sharit, in what is a very close race with six (6) very talented candidates, to be the new Fire Chief for the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District with contract negotiations to be conducted between now and our next regular meeting on 09/21/11 where the Board will make the formal appointment if those negotiations are successful. Trustee Grant seconded the motion.

No more discussion. Motion carried 5-0.

Chief Sharit addressed the Board and audience..."I want to thank the Board for the opportunity I will not let you down. I believe you know me well enough by now, that I am driven and I will do the best job possible. I will to work, together with the team, to move forward and take this great organization to even greater heights than we have. I am excited and motivated and a little shell shocked. But, thank you for the opportunity. I do echo the Board comments, because I have spent my career with these gentlemen, and they are all excellent candidates and a great team. Where I come up short, I know that anyone of these gentlemen will excel past me, in many different ways and I know we can work together as a team and I look forward to working with you as a Board. Thank you."

6. Possible Action Item: Public Comment.

District resident and former Fire Board Trustee Patrick Atherton commended the Board for this hiring process. He acknowledged this an awkward process; it is uncomfortable to do job interviews and discuss candidates in a public setting. He commended the board for conducting the interviews in a professional manner.

Chairman Dorton acknowledged Patrick Atherton's 16 years of service on the Tahoe Douglas Fire Board.

Interim Fire Chief Van Ogami, claiming to be the "shortest term Fire Chief in TDFPD history", acknowledged Carrie Nolting and Kate Warner for setting up the meeting.

District resident and former Fire Board Trustee Bob Cook echoed the comments that everyone did an excellent job, the candidates were fantastic, and the set up was great. It was a nice process to watch, he stressed again that it is difficult to be in an open venue like this and talk about personalities and the people who were going to run the District. He said he hoped that no one's feelings got hurt, that he hopes everyone can grow from this experience and he expressed his confidence that they can. Ben has a great team to work with and his succession, because we are looking at more than one Fire Chief here tonight. When Ben leaves look who you have to choose from, and that includes the guys we have in the back here tonight.

Chairman Dorton acknowledged that we will be looking within this group for promotions in the very near future. He thanked Bob Cook as well for 16 years of service on the Fire Board.

7. Discussion: ***Confirm next regular meeting on Wednesday, September 21 @ 4:00 pm, possible agenda items.***

Agenda items for September 21 were discussed:

- Approval of Fire Chief Contract
- Fire Chief residential distance
- Appoint the Fire Chief

8. Action Item: ***Adjourn.***

A motion was made by Trustee Seibel to confirm the next regular meeting as scheduled. Trustee Kjer seconded the motion. No discussion, motion carried 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 pm.

This meeting was recorded on audio tape.

Kate Warner
Administrative Assistant
Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection Dist