

TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE PREVENTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
September 23, 2015

Those Present:

Chairman Larry Schussel
Vice Chairman Greg Felton
Trustee Bill Kirschner
Trustee Seibel
Fire Chief Ben Sharit
Legal Counsel Devon Reese
Battalion Chief Jim Antti
Battalion Chief Rich Nalder
Battalion Chief Todd Moss
Fire Marshal Eric Guevin
Fire Inspector Todd Stroup

Engineer Andy Isenberg
Engineer Chris Peterson
Captain Ralph Jones
Captain Brian Zabel
Forester John Pickett
Crew Foreman Matt Fogarty
Office Manager Kate Warner
Accounting Specialist Carrie Nolting
Administrative Assistant Casey O'Neill
Guest Bob Cook
Guest Ann Grant

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of allegiance was led by Engineer Peterson.

3. Roll Call

Chairperson Schussel, Vice Chairman Felton, Trustee Kirschner and Trustee Seibel were present. Trustee Kjer was absent. A quorum was present.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Vice Chairman Felton motioned to approve the agenda. Trustee Seibel seconded the motion. Motion approved 4-0.

5. Public Comment

Chief Sharit introduced and congratulated our newly appointed Battalion Chief Todd Moss. He will be the A-shift Battalion Chief /EMS Chief.

Chief Sharit announced that Assistant Chief Allison's Last Call will be on Friday, October 16th to celebrate his retirement and twenty years of service.

Captain Jones commented that years ago his son in law, an Aircraft Mechanic with the U.S. Air Force, donated a flag that was flown over Iraq on the "Soul Reaper". This flag is currently on display in the lobby at Station 23. Last December his son in law went on his fourth deployment and requested a second flag that was flown on the MQ 1B "Predator". Captain Jones presented this flag to TDFPD on behalf of his son in law.

Guest Cook thanked the fire district for hosting the annual Pancake Breakfast and the Fire House luncheon for the retirees. Everybody in attendance raved about the events, they were a huge success.

Furthermore, Guest Cook thanked Chief Sharit for sending a TDFPD representative to the TRIAD meeting last month. It is important to have Douglas County lake representation at these meetings and he was pleased to see TDFPD and East Fork Fire representing their residents.

6. Approval of the Consent Calendar.

Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes 07/22/15
- b. Monthly Expenditures
- c. Financials 06/30/15

Vice Chairman Felton motioned to approve the Consent Calendar items as presented. Trustee Kirschner seconded the motion. Motion approved 4-0.

Vice Chairman Felton commented that it is sometimes difficult to forecast where the district will land when working through twelve months of financial statements; however, he believes the district has had a healthy year. He wanted to thank all TDFPD staff for managing the expenses so well, especially during a time when the district is still recovering from the recession.

7. For Possible Action: Consent items moved forward

None.

8. Presentation: Employee Recognition
Fire Chief Ben Sharit

Chief Sharit recognized Engineer/Acting Captain Peterson for his ten years of service and presented a service award to him.

Chief Sharit also recognized Engineer Isenberg for his five years of service and presented a service award to him.

Both employees are currently in the Captain's Academy. Chief Sharit thanked them both for their dedication and hard work.

9. For Possible Action: Request for fire district representation to attend Douglas County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners meetings regarding the Buckeye Reservoir Project; and to consider funding for related public relations for Douglas County Sewer Improvement District (DCSID).

Bob Cook, DCSID

Cook informed the board that he is not asking for any funding from the fire district at this time, but is requesting support on the project proposal and participation in upcoming Douglas County meetings.

DCSID has spent almost half a million dollars on the Buckeye Reservoir Project, which the board should be very familiar with as the DCSID Chairman Mike Bradford previously presented the details of this project to the board. Cook is now asking the fire district to give their support publicly at community meetings

Thursday, September 29th - Tahoe Citizens Committee meeting

The TCC was formed years ago to address the issues residents at the lake encountered. The TCC wants to make sure their needs are met in the county because Tahoe represents 37% of all revenues for Douglas County. One item they will be addressing at this meeting is a Phase 3 proposal to move the senior center and library to Kahle Community Center in order to offset the cost of heating the Carson Valley swimming pool. The vacant senior center building could then be used as a possible training facility for the fire district and other agencies. The TCC meeting is a good opportunity for the

fire district and board members to gain more knowledge about this complex project and to establish support. The TCC should have the best and most complete information.

Tuesday, October 13th at 11:00 am - Orientation Meeting - Carson Valley Inn (CVI)
To answer questions and educate those who plan on attending the meeting.

Tuesday, October 13th at 1:00pm Douglas County Planning Commission – Old Courthouse.

Thursday, November 5th at 11:00 am - Orientation Meeting - Carson Valley Inn (CVI)
To answer questions and educate those who plan on attending the meeting.

Thursday, November 5th at 1:00 pm - Douglas County Board of Commissioners – Old Courthouse

The goal for these meetings is to fill the seats and to have speakers in support of the Buckeye Reservoir Project. In the meantime, Cook asked the fire board to send letters of support to the planning commissioners. He can provide the letter template if needed and it can be presented at the actual meeting if you choose to speak.

Vice Chairman Felton asked what happens if this plan does not go through.

Cook replied that there would be a 20% minimum rate increase for Douglas County Lake Tahoe residents.

Vice Chairman Felton asked what physically would happen.

Cook said that they would be able to complete the project, but it would not have the gravel pit paying for itself. The project proposal pays for itself. If we do not move forward with the project and Douglas County decides to mitigate Buckeye Wash, then it will cost ten million dollars. This project proposal will cost less than one million dollars. So, Douglas County could still build a reservoir, but they would have to tax the lake residents.

Vice Chairman Felton added that when Bradford completed his presentation he understood that there was some opposition to this project and asked if it was still the same source.

Cook answered the person who initially was against the project has since turned around. Ben Johnson, Real Estate appraiser, increased his properties being affected by the project by \$50,000. Part of the negotiation is to provide some landscaping for those

properties. Also, they will put asphalt tailings and polymer along the road to prevent dust. Most of the logistics are all worked out now.

However, the current opposition is coming from Windhaven as the project is about 330 feet from the backside of their fence. The Buckeye Reservoir project vehicles will not be going by homes and will not destroy or tear up roads.

Trustee Seibel asked if a mining permit is required in order to move forward with the gravel pit.

Cook stated that they will need a temporary special use permit, which is a mining permit, but there will be no blasting.

Trustee Seibel asked what is needed if it was done without becoming an aggregate pit.

Cook said an aggregate pit would be a lot simpler, but they have not gone in that direction, and it would not be a project that pays for itself. He does not feel that the lake residents should have to pay the increased rates because we have the option of this self-paid plan.

10. For Possible Action: Strategic Plan Update - Community Outreach
TDFPD Social Media Team

The Social Media Team is comprised of Administrative Assistant Casey O'Neill, Crew Supervisor Keegan Schafer, Office Manager Kate Warner and Fire Marshal Eric Guevin all of which attended social media seminars last spring and have been putting that new information into use for the fire district.

Under Community Outreach in the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan the following the action items were addressed:

1. Model successful methodologies for effective use of the fire district's Facebook and Twitter accounts.
2. Market internally and externally who, what and where of Facebook and Twitter.
3. Research, fund and develop a more effective website.

In 2010, Fire Marshal Guevin started the Twitter and Facebook accounts for TDFPD as part of his role as the Public Information Officer.

Fire Marshal Guevin presented on the Tahoe Fire Twitter page.

- www.twitter.com/tahoefire.
- Platform use - for instant, short messages regarding fires and/or emergency situations and to prompt action.
- Our strategy - balance "feel good" stories, pictures and videos to keep the viewers engaged. Re-tweet information from agencies/partners we follow to increase our network.
- Current stats - 290 followers, following 153 and have composed 343 tweets.
- Next step - Office Manager Warner added that our strategy for Twitter is instant, funny or emergency related. If the tweet makes them think of the fire district in a positive way then it is considered a success. When something significant happens in the fire district and the phone starts ringing, then this is exactly the type of information we want to tweet. For example, if there is a smoke sighting in the district, and we know it is a controlled burn, we will then tweet about it because it is a concern to our district residents. The goal is to be able to communicate with our residents and to determine what they are interested in and what kind of platform they are using to find it.

Administrative Assistant O'Neill presented the Tahoe Fire Facebook page.

- www.facebook.com/tahoefire.
- Platform use - advertisement for fire district events and programs such as blood drives, compost combustibles, Pancake Breakfast etc.
- Our strategy - Shared posts and photos are huge because it creates a larger audience. Engagements are when followers "like", share and comment on our posts. Important to stay active on the page as it steadily increases our audience with new page likes.
- Current stats - Went from 60 "likes" to over 380 in just a few months of being consistently active on the page.
- Next step - Advertise for our social media websites on staff business cards, e-mail signatures, print ads and flyers.

Office Manager added that the Zephyr Crew established a Facebook page first, and sharing some of their photos this past summer created a lot of interest and grew our audience.

Office Manager Warner presented the new Tahoe Douglas Fire website.

- www.tahoefire.org.
- Platform use - The website's purpose is for branding. It should portray the image of the fire district's values including professionalism, vitality, credibility, integrity,

etc. It should educate the public on what the fire district does on a daily basis and provide electronic access to fire district information and documents.

- Our strategy - Designed to be user friendly – direct and uncomplicated. Blogs (newsletters) will be updated every two weeks and subscribers will receive the newsletter by e-mail after 5pm that day. We do not want to inundate our users with e-mails.
- Our audience - Contractors, fire district residents, special event organizers and district employees. District residents can now request defensible space inspections, chipping and community work day assistance through the site. Fire prevention documents can also be obtained, such as operational permits and plan review applications.
- Next step – subscription drive.

Currently, there is a social media policy in place; however, it has been directed at employee use. Warner shared that it needs to be expanded with regards to what to do if you have a member of the public bashing the fire district or using profanity on the page, because we cannot permanently delete the post. We have to retain those records as a public agency. There are manual systems and different companies available to handle this, and we will be looking into what is the best option for the fire district.

Fire Marshal Guevin added that before the district was spending a lot of money on direct mailings; now the idea is that the social media platforms will decrease the amount of mailings as they are a more direct connection to the public at no cost.

Vice Chairman Felton asked if the district has the ability to text information out about a significant event in the district.

Office Manager Warner responded that not currently, but we have been researching systems that use it to get important information out quickly.

Fire Marshal Guevin added that there are other avenues through emergency management such as Reverse 911. There are other tools for this such as Twitter and using the right tool is important.

11. For Possible Action: **Discussion and possible action to adopt the 2015 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).**
Forester John Pickett

After the Angora Fire in 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger and Governor Gibbons appointed Forester Pickett to the Blue Ribbon Commission of Lake Tahoe, which is where he met Chief Novak. At that time, Novak and Pickett both realized that the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was due for an update. The CWPP update is now complete and ready for the board to adopt today.

Forester Pickett and Forest Schafer (Forester from NTFPD) were the primary project leaders on the CWPP update. However, the credit goes to the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT), which includes the multi-jurisdictional group of people around the lake that worked together to put forth the perfect project.

Back in 2004, the original CWPP was put together by Resource Concepts Inc. (RCI) immediately after the Healthy Forest Restoration Act was passed. It defined projects and stated that the USFS must consult with local jurisdictions about wildfire mitigation. This impacted the way we work with our federal partners as they must consult with us first and foremost. This was met with some scorn with the belief that fire departments were going to log the Tahoe Basin. The TRPA then determined that the methodology was sound and gave it their blessing. After the plan was in place, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) became the main funding source that would support the plan. With SNPLMA funding, the plan became a multi-jurisdictional, cost effective, fuels reduction and hazard reduction strategy.

In the Tahoe Douglas Fire District, all private land owners were initially excluded from the plan due to not having the money to complete the work and/or regulations in the Tahoe Basin. For the last seven years, the district has been justifying why work needs to be done on certain privately owned lands, such as Tranquility Estates and Tahoe Village. However, today, this is no longer true due to the public educational piece "Living with Fire". This helped to justify the cause when it published the new rules for defensible space. The "Living with Fire" piece is fully supported by the TRPA and has been adopted by all the fire districts in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Since then, there have been about 2,000 acres treated on private and local government properties in the Tahoe Douglas Fire District. Furthermore, there have been 18,000 acres treated from 2000-2007 and another 28,000 acres from 2008-2014 in the entire Lake Tahoe Basin.

Nationally, wildfire trends have been increasing and getting worse. Without forest thinning or management, forests become over stocked causing catastrophic wildfires beyond what is historically normal. This is why fires are burning more than 50,000 acres a day and why fire suppression costs are becoming more expensive. Currently, we spend two billion dollars a year on wildland fire suppression and last year in California received only three million dollars in wildfire mitigation costs. In the 2000's, 25,000 structures have been lost due to wildfires impacting our home owners insurance. In our district, State Farm requires defensible space inspections before renewing insurance policies.

In 2009, the Federal Land Assistance Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act was passed establishing a separate account for funding of emergency wildfire suppression activities undertaken on National Forest System lands. This national cohesive strategy was then brought home to the Lake Tahoe Basin with five divisions, which include the South Shore (Lake Valley and the City of SLT), Meeks Bay, North Tahoe, North Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Douglas. Each division is considered a permanent planning area with the goal of planning for a fire start.

Vice Chairman Felton asked if the nature of fire starts has changed.

Pickett responded, not particularly. Most fire starts are human caused and vary year to year on specifics, whether it was by cigarettes, campfires, etc.

With the SNLPMA funding, we had to re-evaluate where the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) was because the original list of projects was inadequate in protecting our communities. This also changed the ratio from federal lands within the WUI and local, private and state lands within the WUI. In the past, the fire districts would be competing against the USFS for grant funding and losing because the majority of the acres in the WUI are USFS land. Now there is a new multi-jurisdictional strategy and the WUI is inclusive. If something is within a mile and half of a legally permitted structure than it is within the WUI. We must completely disregard the notion of urban except for the casinos at Stateline. With these acres in the mix, it makes sense to fund the local governments and private properties as they are considered about half of the WUI.

Need to take it a step further and complete full community assessment. The entire Lake Tahoe Basin has been nominated to be a fire adapted community learning network hub. The work completed here is being broadcasted nationally so other communities can learn from our experience. We have written both the questions and the answers in the CWPP for other communities to use as a learning tool. Furthermore, we have created a

defense zone to protect life safety and property that must be evaluated for fuels reduction and then may be excluded if it does not need to be treated. For example, there is no need to treat a lake; therefore, it can be excluded. If making an error, it is better to determine the land is not safe and then later proving it is safe and excluding it from the WUI.

Furthermore, the team took a national model and a national data set and ran fire behavior models for the fire district to determine the WUI. We found that our WUI exactly corresponded with what the BLM and USFS said would burn catastrophically. From this, there were nine permanent planning areas created that would be maintained and updated in a database as defensible space work is completed. Fuels reduction efforts adjacent to a community are not going to prevent home ignitions. The homeowner must also contribute by completing defensible space work and having ignition resistant construction. The goal is to complete the work on the exterior of the community as well as within the communities where the homes are. This creates the fire adapted community.

In order to be successful within the community, you must provide resources to help the homeowners. The fire districts provides free defensible space inspections, community work days, the compost combustibles program and even grant funding for those needing financial assistance. If the fire district makes this an easy process, the homeowners will get it done.

Lastly, the fire district needs to provide effective and efficient wildfire response. The Zephyr Fire Crew must maintain their credentials and continue training with line firefighters.

Chief Sharit recognized Foresters Pickett and Schafer for their work on the CWPP and all of the contributing team members. It is an outstanding piece of work.

Grant added that this is a huge accomplishment for Tahoe to be the only area in the United States who has a CWPP like this. If you look at the fire maps, Nevada has had very little compared to California, and if you look at all the work that has been done around Nevada, it shows that it is working.

Vice Chairman Felton's impression is that there is less flammable materials in Nevada compared to California.

Grant commented that there are many of areas in northeastern Nevada that have had huge fires in the past, but a lot of work has been done since to prevent future wildfires.

Trustee Kirschner motioned to approve the action item. Trustee Seibel seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion approved 4-0.

12. For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action to set the date for the Fire Chief's annual performance review and to select the Board Trustees who will compile the results of review.

Fire Chief Ben Sharit

Chief Sharit notified the board of the need for his annual performance review and to have two board members volunteer to compile his performance evaluation results.

Last year Former Trustee Grant and Vice Chairman Felton compiled the results and the year before was Chairman Schussel and Trustee Kjer.

Chief Sharit stated the timeframe would be less than a month to complete.

Chairman Schussel stated that first, all the board members need to complete the evaluation form and turn into the two individuals who will compile the results. Then, the selected trustees will schedule a meeting with Chief Sharit to review with him before the next meeting on October 28th.

Trustee Kirschner and Trustee Seibel volunteered to compile the results. However, Trustee Kirschner's time frame is tight because he will be out of town for the majority of this month. Chairman Schussel volunteered in Trustee Kirschner's place. Trustee Seibel determined that the evaluation forms will be due back to the volunteers by October 7th and then they will meet with Chief Sharit one week before the next meeting.

Public Comment – none.

13. For Possible Action: Annual Operating Plan

Fire Chief Ben Sharit

Chief Sharit presented the Annual Operating Plan is for Fiscal Year 2016 which had been distributed to all the employees and board members. He recognized Chief Allison for his excellent work on completing the training plan portion in a timely manner. He thanked

Administrative Assistant O'Neill for formatting the document. Also, he thanked the divisional leaders for their input on the capital projects plan. This document contains the annual training plan, capital projects ten year plan, organizational values, mission and vision statements, organizational charts, service plan and summary. It will be posted on the website soon.

Vice Chairman Felton commented that it is a quality document and he is interested to see what the feedback is from the crews.

15. Report Item: Review of Monthly Fire District Activity
Fire Chief Ben Sharit

Chief Sharit recognized all staff and firefighters for their hard work this summer handling another busy fire season, especially with the many out of district responses.

Vice Chairman Felton added that he does not think the residents of the district realize how much the Tahoe Douglas crews are fighting fires in other areas.

Chief Sharit agreed and added that he communicates this to our residents whenever he can.

Chief Sharit also recognized the staff members who assisted with the audit, especially Accounting Specialist Nolting. And, thank you to Captain Spry for taking over the inventory process.

Employee Years of Service Recognition:

August:

Engineer Kevin Crebs	18 Years of Service
Fire Inspector Todd Stroup	2 Years of Service

September:

Battalion Chief Rich Nalder	35 Years of Service
Firefighter/Paramedic Jenny Alustiza	5 Years of Service
Engineer Andrew Isenberg	5 Years of Service
Firefighter/Paramedic James Ward	2 Years of Service
Firefighter/Paramedic Chris Wade	1 Year of Service

Updates:

Annual Audit – Staff have been working closely with the auditors and as mentioned before did a great job preparing for the audit process.

2015 Lake Tahoe Summit – Held in August at Round Hill Pines with congressional members and governors. Chief Sharit was honored to have the opportunity to update the legislators on the status of wildfire and fuels reduction process in the basin as a speaker at Senator Feinstein’s luncheon.

Pancake Breakfast – Thanked the on-duty crews who hosted the event. Our residents were very appreciative of the event, it was a great turn out and we raised approximately \$1,500 in donations.

Retiree Luncheon – Crews made lunch for approximately 35 retirees.

Financial Summary – Financial Advisor Wayne Omel to call in at the October meeting regarding our future investments.

Attachments:

Fire Fest this weekend from 10-2 pm at the Lake Tahoe Airport. Will have the Bomb Squad, jaws of life demonstration and super scooper just to name a few attractions.

Captain Pete Dern was released from the hospital. (Fresno firefighter who fell through the roof in March).

Recognized the Tahoe Douglas firefighters who stepped up last minute to stand guard at the mortuary until the funeral procession began for fallen USFS firefighter Michael Hallenbeck.

16. Report Item: Review of Fire District Division Reports

Fire Prevention – Fire Marshal Eric Guevin

- **Edgewood Lodge** - breaking ground and going vertical.
- **Defensible Space Curbside program** is wrapping up for year. Out 640 inspections, 550 are now compliant, 67 are still outstanding who received certified letters that could roll into enforcement if not in compliance by October 15th deadline.

- **Cabin Fire at Zephyr Cove** – Fire escaped from wood burning stove. Used as a learning tool because some of the vegetation near the cabin could have led to a worse event if windier conditions. Another example of the importance of defensible space.
- **Harvey's/Harrah's** – Recently, broke down concert venue, but will keep the stage up to save money. New Chief Engineer Sam Adams.
- **Mont Bleu** - New General Manager. Lots of construction going on. Next big event to prepare for is the Freaker's Ball on October 23rd.
- **Hard Rock** –Temporary certificate for occupancy, 15th floor is still not finalized. Swimming pool is still shut down; plan to work with operations next season to re-design the pool and establish a water supply.
- **Labor Day Fireworks** - Reports of debris washing up on the shores of the lake, enforcement action was made due to inefficient clean up.
- **Investigating several small fire starts** in and around the district, mainly off of trailheads.
- **Kudos to FF/P Pettit and Fire Inspector Stroup** for assisting a hearing impaired child and family install a "bed shaker" fire alarm.

Operations/Training – Acting Assistant Chief Allison

- **Consortium Testing** – Hiring for Firefighter/Paramedics. Application period is now open and closes October 2nd. Agencies participating in the consortium are North Tahoe Fire (Truckee), North Lake Fire (Incline), Carson City Fire and TDFPD. Written exam is Nov. 2nd, physical agility Nov. 3rd and assessment center Nov. 4-6th.
- **Thank you letter** – From Chief Pool of Lake Valley FPD; recognized Capt. Rossi, Eng. Pratt, FF/P Apple, FF/P Baker, FF/P Reddig, Eng. Johnson, FF/P Serrano, Capt. Salerno for response to a motor vehicle accident on July 17th. All crew members did an excellent job and were highly professional. Chief Pool was very grateful as our crew cared for his family members.
- **Assistant Chief Recruitment** – Essay questions, video interviews, assessment center, meet and greet, interview panel and chief interview completed. Background checks pending

Zephyr Crew Foreman – Matt Fogarty

- Crew in route back home from the North Star Fire in Washington State; Approximately 220,000 acres, Type 1 incident.
- Crew in district working in Uppaway Estates in Glenbrook.
- Crew in district responded to the Spooner Fire last week, second on scene and caught the fire at 2/10 of an acre.

- Crew in district also assisted Engine 21 with an injured hiker call.
- Projects for remainder of the season include Shakespeare Rock in Glenbrook and USFS urban lots in Lower Kingsbury.
- After layoffs, seven-man crew will stay on for prescribed burning-200 acres to pile burn. Must leave piles out for at least a year before burning.

Discussion: Confirmed the next meeting, with a proposed date of Wednesday, October 28, 2015 with a start time of 3:00 pm; possible agenda items.

Trustee Kirschner requested to move the meeting date to Thursday, October 29th as he will be out of town.

Chief Sharit will look into this. No action taken at this time.

Trustee Kirschner then stated that he will call into the meeting or move his flight up one day.

Adjourn

Trustee Kirschner motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Vice Chairman Felton seconded the motion. Motion approved 4-0.

This meeting was recorded on audio tape.

Casey O'Neill
Board Secretary
Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District