

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

TUESDAY

1:30 P.M.

MAY 26, 2015

**CONCURRENT MEETING**

PRESENT:

Marsha Berkbigler, Chair  
Vaughn Hartung, Commissioner  
Jeanne Herman, Commissioner  
Bob Lucey, Commissioner

ABSENT:

Kitty Jung, Vice Chair  
Nancy Parent, County Clerk  
John Slaughter, County Manager  
Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 1:38 p.m. with the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District (TMFPD/SFPD) Board of Fire Commissioners and the Reno City Council in special session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel, said due to the pending litigation between the City of Reno and the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, there should not be any discussion regarding the matters in litigation, which concerned accounting, workers' compensation and performance under the old Interlocal Agreement.

**15-0421 AGENDA ITEM 4 – PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Agenda Subject: “Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to three minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Board of County Commissioners agenda. The Board of County Commissioners will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Commission, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Commission, Sierra Fire Protection District Commission, and Reno City Council as a whole.”**

George Newell said he was against any consolidation with the City of Reno due to the Warm Springs area now having a better response time, the service was less costly, and all of the volunteers with the Warm Springs Volunteer Fire Department would be lost. He hoped everything would be kept like it was right now.

Jerry Gamroth advised the City of Reno submitted an amendment proposal to SB 185, which was never given to the citizens and was a ruse to go forward with consolidation by using regionalization as a buzzword. He said the Interlocal Agreement was unsatisfactory, expensive, and did not provide the best service in spite of previous comments. He stated he was involved in one emergency medical service (EMS) experience under the consolidated operation that was unsatisfactory and a second with the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD), which was an outstanding response. He said the District was an excellent fire-service provider with Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedics on every engine, and it needed to stay independent with a simple automatic aid agreement. He encouraged the Commission to contact the Assembly Committee indicating it supported SB 185 without any convoluted amendments. He said automatic aid should go forward for the protection of life and property.

Carol Fineberg said she was concerned about the potential consolidation/merger. She stated the TMFPD exemplified due diligence where money, staffing, and the volunteer program were all handled in an appropriate and efficient manner. She said she wished she could say the same for the City of Reno and the Sierra Fire Protection District having four people on every call, more Chiefs than already existed, no volunteers, and mandatory union firefighters, which sounded a lot like what had not worked in the past, and was why there was a TMFPD. She said she hoped for a mutual aid situation where the closest agency would respond to an emergency call and would bill the other agency for the time. She felt that would be fair, equitable and would best serve the people in the City of Reno and the County.

AJ Lyon stated she strongly endorsed what Ms. Fineberg said. She said it was time to use some common sense, and to say the volunteers could not be used lacked common sense.

Cliff Low stated the three Fire Protection Districts in unincorporated Washoe County were each a separate legal entity from the County and were not funded by the County's General Fund. He said the Districts were funded by dedicated revenues to provide emergency services to the geographical areas that paid those taxes. He stated the fact that the Board of Fire Commissioners was made up of the same people as the Board of County Commissioners did not change the fact that the TMFPD was a separate entity. He said he spoke about all of this at a recent Reno City Council meeting and about SB 185, but his comments were ignored. He said the TMFPD was not the County and it was not the County's fire department, but was a Fire District.

Ken Koeppe said he lived long enough to gain knowledge by experience. He stated an attempt to unify the Oakland, California public schools failed. He believed this would also fail because bigger was not always better. He said he was opposed to the City of Reno's amendment.

Robert Parker commented on the City of Reno's proposal for a Regional Fire Protection District and his reasons for being opposed to the proposal. A copy of his comments was placed on file with the Clerk.

Cathy Brandhorst spoke about issues of concern to herself.

**15-0422      AGENDA ITEM 5**

**Agenda Subject: "Overview of current fire department organization, governance, funding and operation: a. Presentation, discussion and potential direction to staff on the City of Reno Fire Department and b. Presentation, discussion and potential direction to staff on the Truckee Meadows/Sierra Fire Protection Districts."**

Dave Cochran, Reno Fire Department Interim Chief, conducted a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the Reno Fire Department's response and prevention, organizational structure and governance, organizational chart, staffing - personnel and stations, funding and budget, and the 2014 calls for service. A copy of the presentation was placed on file with the Clerk.

Commissioner Hartung asked how the calls were counted. Interim Chief Cochran said one incident number was assigned to each call regardless of the number of apparatus responding.

Fire Chief Charles Moore stated a lot had been said publically about the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) raising taxes and reducing services, and he hoped to clear the air with some facts regarding the TMFPD's finances. He said when the housing bubble burst in 2007 and there was a substantial decrease in assessed values, local governments had to determine how they would deal with that loss of revenue, which was shown on the District Overview slide. He said there had to be operational adjustments to match service delivery with revenues when 27 percent of the TMFPD's revenues were lost. He stated the TMFPD was unable to reach an agreement with the City of Reno on how to do that, which was why the contract was negated. He said 62 percent of the TMFPD's revenues came from property taxes and 28 percent from the consolidated tax (C-tax). He said no revenues were received from the County or the City of Reno. He discussed the City of Reno wanting to remove the annexation credit, which would add another \$1 million to the loss in revenue for the TMFPD, for a total of \$3 million. He said in 2015-16 the TMFPD revenue was within \$60,000 of the revenues in 2007-08, which he felt did not indicate there was a big tax increase. He said with respect to the loss of service, the District had to have flexible staffing, and the Union worked with the TMFPD to reach an agreement that four firefighters per engine would no longer be required.

Chief Moore stated all of the TMFPD's stations were fully staffed 100 percent of the time, had a projected ending fund balance of 25 percent at the end of 2015-16, all engines had at least one advanced life support (ALS) paramedic and at least three firefighters with a reserve firefighter being added occasionally. He said there were 144

volunteers, the TMFPD had no debt, the Hidden Valley Fire Station was opened, two new stations were constructed to replace old stations, they acquired six new Type 1 structural engines, three type 3 brush engines, a hazardous materials trailer, two water tenders were being purchased, and most of the handheld radio equipment was being replaced. He noted the passage of AB 333 would allow the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) to be dissolved sometime in the next year and the TMFPD would assume the boundaries of the SFPD, so there would only be one taxing district. A copy of the presentation was placed on file with the Clerk

Chief Moore discussed the Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating and the breakdown of calls slides. He noted structure fires made up one-half of 1 percent of the total call volume and less than one-fourth of 1 percent required two in and two out, and he discussed how that was dealt with by using a transitional attack. He provided an example of how the TMFPD was really making a difference in people's lives due to having ALS paramedics. He said the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) was largely concentrated in the core, while the TMFPD was concentrated in the outskirts. He stated sometimes a call from the TMFPD was in a best effort response-time zone for REMSA, which was why the change to a three-person crew with a paramedic was made.

Reno City Councilmember Paul McKenzie said the downturn caused a reduction in assessed property values and would that be returned as assessed values came back. Chief Moore said the tax rate was increased, but it did not increase the net amount of tax revenue but instead reduced the amount of the decline, and on average no one saw an increase on their tax bill. Councilmember McKenzie stated people felt it was a tax rate increase even if the increase offset the decreased values. He asked if the Fire Districts would return as the assessed values returned, so the citizens would not get a tax increase. Chief Moore said that was too far in the future for him to be able to answer the question. He said he did not see giving any of that back because there were other things to do.

Councilmember Brekhus said she had not been aware that the C-tax helped fund the TMFPD/SFPD. She asked if they had taxing authority or did the C-tax money flow through the County and was the C-tax only collected in the unincorporated areas. Vicki Van Buren, TMFPD Chief Fiscal Officer, advised it was distributed through the County and dedicated to the TMFPD/SFPD through the Department of Taxation, but she was not sure about the taxing authority. Robert Chisel, City of Reno Finance and Administration Director, said the portions of the C-tax were collected countywide and others were collected statewide and distributed to the entities identified by the Nevada Legislature. Reno City Councilmember David Bobzien said the formula for how the C-tax was distributed was complicated and it would be almost impossible to isolate it by geography. Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr stated Reno residents paid sales tax in the County and a portion of that tax went to the TMFPD. Mr. Chisel replied that was correct.

Councilmember Duerr said she understood going from a four-person to a three-person crew was driven by the budget, but she asked if a four-person crew was the

norm. Chief Moore said with the risks of the high-rise buildings in the downtown urban core, it was appropriate to have four-person crew, but it became less necessary in the outlying areas where most buildings were single-family structures and would not require a ladder truck. He felt the strategy to protect this area should be to use concentric rings with the resources concentrated in the downtown core but, as you moved towards the suburban and rural densities, it would drop to a three-person crew; and on the very rural fringe, volunteers would be used at least as a first response. He said as far as he knew the City of Reno was the only fire department in Northern Nevada that used a four-person crew.

Councilmember Duerr understood the City of Sparks' contract was for a four-person crew, but Sparks went to a three-person crew due to budget cuts. Chief Moore said that was what drove the TMFPD's crew size because, if that had not happened, it would have been necessary to close stations. He said because the TMFPD's stations were more spread out, the Board of Fire Commissioners decided to keep all of the fire stations open. Interim Chief Cochran said the City of Reno had an ISO rating of 2, which was driven by the four-person crew. He stated a four-person crew was the nationally recognized standard, which was a goal and not a requirement. Councilmember Duerr said rather than having a conversation about crew size, she would rather have a conversation about what was the best service to provide to keep people safe.

Reno City Councilmember Oscar Degado asked if Chief Moore supported SB 185. Chief Moore said the Board supported SB 185. Councilmember Degado said the City of Reno was opposed to SB 185 because they felt it was a Band-aid approach, and he was confused because the TMFPD was doing so well and were presenting they did not need the City of Reno's help. He asked if it was felt consolidation or automatic aid would support the TMFPD's overall mission as a Fire District or were we stepping into something we should not. Chief Moore believed automatic aid was what could be done right now to help the citizens. He stated there were places where the TMFPD could help the City of Reno and others where the City of Reno could help the TMFPD.

Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve asked what the District's startup costs were. Chief Moore stated it was documented in the Internal Auditor's report. Interim Chief Cochran stated the budgeted amount was about \$1.2 million, but he was not sure what the final cost was.

Commissioner Lucey noted the 2014 calls for service slide showed Stations 7, 11, and 19 had a significantly smaller number of calls. Interim Chief Cochran said those stations were in an area with a lower call volume, and Station 7 and 19 were browned out a portion of the time.

Commissioner Hartung asked if there were areas in the City of Reno that did not have fire hydrants. Interim Chief Cochran replied there were roughly 10,000 hydrants throughout the City of Reno. Commissioner Hartung asked how an immediate or delayed detection time fit into fighting a fire. Chief Moore said every fire was different, and getting more firefighters on the scene quicker would not always result in

less damage because when the fire was detected was the key. He said detection was the key to getting the fire department on its way and reducing the time between when the fire was detected and when the water was applied. He stated that was a variable, one that the fire departments and governments could not control except through technology. He stated that was why the TMFPD made a very diligent effort to get working smoke detectors into every home, because it was proven that surviving a fire doubled with a working smoke detector. He stated another factor affecting a fire was how many combustibles did a building contain or were accelerants applied. He said if accelerants were involved, the fire would be out of control by the time the firefighters could arrive. He stated more firefighters and a more robust response in every case would not always result in less damage. He advised fire departments could only respond when the fire was detected, and no matter the location, some fires were fully involved on arrival. He said if that was the case, there was not much that could be done except to confine the fire to the structure of origin or, if lucky, to the room of origin.

In response to Mayor Schieve's earlier question, Allison Gordon, Washoe County Internal Auditor, said the transition costs were \$1.4 million, which did not include the station development for Mogul or Hidden Valley. Mayor Schieve noted the amount for building the stations could be significant.

Councilmember Bobzien said the value of today was talking about how we could work together to better to serve everyone. He asked if we could come up with a plan and the funding, would we see some of the stations staffed with four-person crews. Chief Moore said staffing projections would see Sun Valley going to a six-person crew with an engine and a light rescue to handle a lot of Sun Valley's medical calls, which often came in simultaneously. He stated the employees worked hard and deserved higher wages, but the existing costs would go up, which would be very difficult to forecast. He believed the 3 percent increase was not that far off from simple inflation.

Mayor Schieve said we should be looking forward and not backward. She stated yesterday an Assemblywoman said the people did not care about our problems, but only wanted them fixed; and she agreed with that statement. She said this was the time for a positive new start and what had happened was water under the bridge. She stated dispatch needed to be looked at, because five different entities doing dispatch was detrimental to our citizens. She said it did not matter where the firefighters came from if someone had a fire, because it was about saving lives. She commended the Chiefs for doing a great job. Chief Moore said Mayor Schieve was correct with respect to dispatch. He stated having a regional dispatch would go a long ways to getting the fire trucks out the door faster. He felt there were great opportunities for improvement in the dispatch processes.

In response to the call for public comment, Sarah Chvilicek, Blue Ribbon Committee Chair, spoke about the work of the Committee and the Committee's recommendation on putting an automatic aid agreement in place before doing anything else, which would be in the best interests of the citizens. She said to achieve legitimate regionalization of services, there needed to be a fully independent Board with

autonomous authority for regional fire services. She stated there should be a discussion regarding time, costs, and providing an opportunity for flexible spending and staffing across the region. She said all discussions should be transparent.

Sam Dehne spoke about being in favor of the fire merger 15 years ago and against the breakup. He said Chief Moore did a fantastic job in putting together the new District.

Vicky Maltman spoke about the Volunteer Fire Department where she was raised in Pennsylvania that had 350 volunteer firefighters. She said she only had good things to say about the TMFPD and the volunteer fire fighters. She believed public service meant something, and she hoped everyone could come to an agreement that whoever got there first got there first, because the citizens did not care what the name on the responding vehicle was if there was a fire or a medical emergency.

Russell Earle thanked everyone for having a more open mind than they have had in the past. He said he spoke against deconsolidation three years ago. He stated the people were getting service, but there were areas that could be improved for the citizens of both the City of Reno and the County. He said the TMFPD was financially sound, but annexation created a patchwork of service over the years. He said there either needed to be a regional fire service or we needed to work together in a cooperative effort.

There was no action taken on this item.

**15-0423      AGENDA ITEM 6**

**Agenda Subject: “Overview of Automatic Aid: opportunities and challenges: a. Presentation, discussion and potential direction to staff on the City of Reno Fire Department and b. Presentation, discussion and potential direction to staff on the Truckee Meadows/Sierra Fire Protection Districts.”**

Dave Cochran, Reno Fire Department Interim Chief, conducted a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the automatic and mutual aid definitions, automatic aid location advantages, and automatic aid opportunities and challenges. He said at the end of the day it was about what was fair and cost effective to both jurisdictions. He stated the challenges were greater than the opportunities, which could be overcome, but as they were overcome the move would be more towards a regional model instead of an automatic aid model. A copy of the presentation was placed on file with the Clerk.

Reno City Councilmember Paul McKenzie said the City of Reno’s engine companies were not set up to fight a fire without a fire hydrant. Interim Chief Cochran said all of the engines carried water just like the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District’s (TMFPDs) engines did. Councilmember Paul McKenzie asked how long a fire could be fought if the area had no hydrant. Interim Chief Cochran replied about five minutes at full volume. He said another engine would be right behind the first with another 750 gallons, but that would be inadequate for a structure that had a major fire. Councilmember McKenzie said if there was a major structure fire, the Chief would have

to send in a water tender to help support the engine. Chief Moore said dispatch notified the responders if there was a hydrant or not, and a water tender would not be sent if there was a hydrant. Councilmember McKenzie asked if the fire was in the County and the City arrived first, who would take command of the scene. Interim Chief Cochran replied the first arriving apparatus would take command, but typically the jurisdiction that owned the fire would ultimately take command. He said that was not spelled out in SB 185.

Councilmember McKenzie asked how often the jurisdictions and the County's volunteers trained together. Interim Chief Cochran replied they currently did not train together nor did the City of Reno train with the volunteers. He said that was one of the safety and cost issues. Councilmember McKenzie stated what he was getting at was the existing language in SB 185 did not give them the opportunity to sit down and resolve those issues, but the proposed amendment by the City of Reno would give us the change to hash those issues out.

Commissioner Hartung asked if any of the City of Reno's fire stations were browned out. Interim Chief Cochran said Stations 7 and 19 were not always open.

Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr said Southern Nevada had a unified dispatch and automatic vehicle locators (AVL). She stated she understood Storey County and Washoe County had automatic aid. Interim Chief Cochran said he was not aware of them having an automatic aid agreement, but only the one with the City of Sparks. He stated the City of Reno also had an automatic aid agreement with the City of Sparks. Councilmember Duerr asked if a unified dispatch was needed to have automatic aid. Interim Chief Cochran said unified dispatch was the best practice, but there were workarounds, but a unified dispatch meant the dispatchers operated with a common practice and system and every vehicle position was available by looking at a screen. He said unifying dispatch was being worked on, but he had no idea how long it would take to achieve. He said his hesitation in saying how long it would take was because he was not making the policy and financial decisions needed to get there.

Commissioner Lucey asked if SB 185 went into effect without the amendment, how difficult would it be to enact an automatic aid agreement. Interim Chief Cochran said if both parties came to the table to negotiate in good faith, an agreement could be done in 60 to 90 days. Commissioner Lucey said this meeting was about hashing out those issues and coming to some sort of resolution. He said this would be a step in working towards regionalization, but right now we were just talking about automatic aid.

Commissioner Hartung asked what training standards were used. Chief Moore replied the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) was the standard every fire department used except for California. Commissioner Hartung asked if we had an automatic aid agreement with the City of Sparks. Chief Moore said that was correct and the TMFPD conducted training with the Sparks Fire Department. He stated on a daily basis either the TMFPD was providing fire and/or medical aid to the City of Sparks or vice versa. Commissioner Hartung said he thought Sparks' dispatch was located with the Sparks Police Department. Chief Moore stated that was correct.

Commissioner Hartung said the original agreement with the City of Reno was crafted before any members of this Board and the City Council were elected. He said it was a contractual arrangement and not a consolidation, and it seemed we all wanted the same thing, which was a safe, healthy, and secure community. He stated at the end of the day we needed to come to the table and decide what was best for the community and how agreements could be crafted that would protect the community.

Reno City Councilmember Neoma Jardon said with automatic aid came the frustration of multiple entities sending multiple pieces of equipment in response to a call and not sifting out what the most appropriate response would be and by whom. She asked if a unified dispatch would help get rid of the duplication. Interim Chief Cochran said by definition, automatic aid would result in two apparatus going to every call, which did result in a duplication of services where only one apparatus might be needed. Councilmember Jardon said if mutual aid could be requested prior to actually arriving on the scene, who could make that request. Interim Chief Cochran stated that was identified in the mutual aid agreement. He said there was no fixed formula, but was whatever the jurisdictions agreed to. He said the decision to call for mutual aid could be based on the nature of the call or the location. He stated if it was a structure fire, aid would be needed right away. He said the agreement with the City of Sparks was defined geographically.

Commissioner Lucey asked if SB 185 would negate the City of Reno and the TMFPD from working on solutions. Interim Chief Cochran said the concern was SB 185 only mandated the closest apparatus respond, which would trigger some challenges. He said if the City responded to a call in the County, that area of the City would be left unprotected. He said an agreement could build in a mechanism to provide for that situation but, as written, SB 185 did not provide the ability to negotiate that. Commissioner Lucey asked if there was anything regarding the City of Reno's firefighters union that would inhibit those negotiations if SB 185 was enacted as currently written. Interim Chief Cochran said he did not want to speak for Local Firefighters Union 731, but in his experience they had always been open to discuss any reasonable points.

Chair Berkbigler said she understood if dispatch was regional, the dispatcher would be the person to call out the nearest vehicle. Interim Chief Cochran advised technically the computer would call up the closest vehicle. Chair Berkbigler said the dispatcher would not be calling Reno's backup or the TMFPD's backup if only one engine was needed. She stated she was concerned about the example that automatic aid would result in more vehicles arriving on the scene. She felt automatic aid could not be done unless there was a unified dispatch, so the dispatchers could see what was going on. Interim Chief Cochran said with automatic aid two apparatus would respond, which typically would be needed for a fire but not for an emergency medical call. Chair Berkbigler asked even if dispatch only sent one apparatus. Interim Chief Cochran said that was transitioning into a regional department and not an automatic aid situation, because the jurisdiction having authority always responded. Chair Berkbigler asked if that could be worked into the agreement. Interim Chief Cochran said that would be up to the parties during the negotiations. Chair Berkbigler said she would prefer to have

legislation open enough to allow us to work together to do what would be best for our constituents.

Chief Moore said there had been automatic aid prior to July 1, 2012 between the City of Reno and the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD), which was largely exercised in the Boomtown area. He said often there were medical calls the SFPD station across the street would respond to. He stated the City of Reno was notified but, depending on the nature of the call, they often did not respond. He said prior to the contract with the City of Reno, there had been automatic aid between the TMFPD and the City of Reno, but there was no need to have automatic aid during the time of the contract because the City of Reno was running the service. He believed multiple resources did not need to be sent to an incident when only one was required and the requirement for a two-unit response was embedded in the labor agreements. He said the duplicate responses could be avoided if the labor unions agreed only one engine needed to be sent to a particular call.

Chief Moore said the map, which was placed on file with the Clerk, plotted every structure fire for the City of Reno and the TMFPD in 2013-14. He stated the TMFPD had 260 reports of structure fires, but only one third of the time was there actually a fire. He said 32 of those structure fires were closest to Reno. He stated the City of Reno responded to 643 reports of structure fires and the TMFPD would have been closer for 75 of them. He stated 90 percent of the structure fires were extinguished with the first hose being put on the fire. He said he did not see there would be an onerous burden on either department at least on structure fires. He stated automatic aid was offered to the City of Reno on a trial basis, because there were areas where the City could help us and we could help the City. He stated some homes in Hidden Valley were a hundred feet from the TMFPD's station and the TMFPD needed the City's help in Lemmon Valley. He said if emergency medical services (EMS) was included, there was a lot of good we could do for each other. He said if there was a fire station with a paramedic just a few feet away, not calling them was the wrong thing to do.

Chief Moore said the TMFPD built three fire stations within the last three years. He stated two were located in the County and Mogul, Station 35, was built only a few feet inside the City of Reno, because that location worked for providing the best response times into Verdi and into Caughlin Ranch. He said Station 14 in Damonte Ranch had been there for 30 years and the City built a station only a mile and a half away. He said the station in Stead was within the City of Reno's limits because of annexation, not because the station was built within the City. He stated the TMFPD intended to relocate Station 14 to an area that would better serve the County. He believed there would be some opportunity to look at overlap. He stated Fire Chief Hernandez testified the City of Reno would have to open a station in the south to provide automatic aid to the TMFPD, but the TMFPD had five fire stations south of the McCarran Loop while the City had one. He said the City would not have to go great distances to provide aid to the TMFPD. He stated the complexity of the boundaries was no one's fault but were simply how they had evolved. He felt automatic aid could be achieved quickly, both

in dispatch and reaching an agreement. He said once that was done, the conversation could continue about regionalization, but he believed automatic aid should be done first.

Commissioner Lucey asked Chief Moore the same question he asked of Interim Chief Cochran regarding the labor union. Chief Moore said he could not speak for the union, but he believed the union would be willing to discuss a single-unit response across the jurisdictions without getting anything back, but there could be something in the contract that could prohibit that from going forward. He said the contract did have an exclusive right to serve clause, but he felt that would not be an obstacle. Commissioner Lucey asked if the TMFPD trained with the City of Sparks. Chief Moore replied they did. Commissioner Lucey asked what the City of Sparks' Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating was. Chief Moore believed it was a 2. Commissioner Lucey asked if our ISO rating being a 3 affected training. Chief Moore said ISO was not that relevant to training. He stated ISO recognized that automatic aid agreements were a benefit, so they helped with the audit points with respect to the rating. He said everyone would benefit from having the additional audit points. Commissioner Lucey asked if the District had trained with the City of Reno when there was mutual aid. Chief Moore stated he was only aware of HAZMAT training being done. Commissioner Lucey said Interim Chief Cochran indicated automatic aid would create some challenges for the City of Reno and did Chief Moore see any challenges from his standpoint. Chief Moore said one was technological regarding dispatch, but he felt getting there was very close. He felt they needed to start training together and there had to be conversations regarding what the TMFPD would do when it was first on the scene and what they needed the City of Reno to do for the TMFPD. He said he agreed with Interim Chief Cochran that it would take 90 days to get dispatch up and running and drafting an agreement.

Mayor Schieve asked what the average response time was. Chief Moore replied it depended on the location, because some areas were far away in the rural fringes, but 90 percent of the time the TMFPD's response was within eight minutes. Interim Chief Cochran said the Reno's response time was 5.30 to 5.45 minutes. Mayor Schieve asked how Chief Moore decided when to call for mutual aid. Chief Moore stated a number of factors were used such as the number of 9-1-1 calls received by dispatch and by the caller providing information to the dispatcher about the level of involvement. He said normally four engines were sent to every structure fire and the decision to call for mutual aid could be based on information from dispatch that it was spreading to another house or to the wildlands. He said he believed in the last year the City of Reno had been called for help five times. Mayor Schieve asked what those response times were. Chief Moore replied he did not know. Mayor Schieve said the Hidden Valley response was 28 minutes, and she worried there was a hesitancy to call for help. She said she talked to a couple of the TMFPD's firefighters and they indicated they were told not to call the City of Reno, but to instead call Carson or other areas. She asked if that was true. Chief Moore said he did not believe that was true. He said the City of Reno and the TMFPD had a mutual aid agreement at the time of the Hidden Valley Fire, but mutual aid had to be requested by the command officer on the scene based on Reno's insistence. He said if there was a delay that was part of the reason why. He stated immediate suppression action was taken and the fire was darkened down, but when fire was seen coming out of

the attic, they knew there was a much larger fire. He said the fire was significant because of the delay in the time it took for Mr. West to notice the fire and call for help, which meant the fire had about a 15 minute head start. He said the garage was full of things that could burn, the fire wall between the garage and the attic was removed, and there was additional storage in the attic. When the fire commander saw the fire breached into the attic was when the decision was made to call for mutual aid. He said there was not an intentional decision made by staff to not call for mutual aid because of any possible animosity. He stated he instructed his staff when they needed help, they called for mutual aid. Mayor Schieve said maybe he could clarify that with staff, because they were confused as to what the protocol was. Chief Moore said the *Reno Gazette-Journal* (*RGJ*) did not report the incident correctly. Mayor Schieve said the City would do whatever we could. Chief Moore replied the District would do the same, because he was very anxious to get to an agreement on automatic aid.

Reno City Councilmember Jenny Brekhus said the City of Reno's documentation said the request of Chief Officer to Chief Officer was requested by the TMFPD during the drafting of the document. Chief Moore replied that was not correct. She said Chief Moore mentioned the numbers on how often the TMFPD would be coming into the City of Reno regarding fires, but he also talked about cardiac arrests. She said the bill was about fires. She said even though the bill was limited to fires, the bigger vision would be having automatic aid for emergency medical. Chief Moore said there was nothing in the legislation as it was originally drafted that said more could not be done.

Councilmember Brekhus felt volunteers had no place coming into the City of Reno, and would the bill bring them into the City. Chief Moore said there were volunteers who helped fight the Caughlin Ranch fire. Councilmember Brekhus said for other than a conflagration, would volunteers be sent into Reno. Chief Moore said that was per the agreement. He explained volunteers were used as a force multiplier and a peak activity unit when there were weather events and to protect the rural fringe. He said there were not many volunteer stations in close proximity to the City's limits. He stated he had no problem with restricting volunteer response into the City, because it would take them 15 to 30 minutes to get to the station to respond.

Councilmember Brekhus said the second finding on page 1 of the Blue Ribbon report noted there were some fire agencies in the region that were challenged financially regarding sustainability. She felt the report was not talking about the City of Reno, but was it talking about the TMFPD/SPFD, and if so, did the TMFPD need automatic aid to get the job done. Chief Moore believed the report was speaking about the labor agreements largely mandating crew sizes instead of the crew sizes being mandated by the elected officials. He said the Interlocal was negated because the TMFPD could not afford four-person crews throughout the system, but could afford three-person crews. He said when the TMFPD went to a three-person crew, the TMFPD became financially sustainable. Councilmember Brekhus stated 900 units had a tentative map and would be located just before the turnoff to Washoe Valley. She advised the development could go final any day, and she asked if the TMFPD could serve that development. Chief

Moore replied the TMFPD had five career companies south of the McCarran Loop, and he was confident that development could be served. Councilmember Brekhus said she was concerned automatic aid would mandate the City of Reno having to service the new growth in the unincorporated County. Chief Moore urged the City Council and the Commissioners to study the locations on the map. He said where Reno's Station 12 could help the TMFPD would be on Geiger Grade. He stated the City would not have to go much further than that because the TMFPD's engines would be closer, but the TMFPD would call for mutual aid if the fire was large enough that the TMFPD could not handle it. He said he would call every fire department in Nevada to put out a fire if he had to, and he was not embarrassed to do that.

Commissioner Hartung thanked the volunteers for doing a phenomenal job, and he did not care if a volunteer or a career firefighter showed up if he was in need.

Councilmember Duerr said dispatch seemed to be the key in getting to automatic aid in an efficient manner. She stated she had not heard from the Reno Fire Department that their vehicles had AVL. Chief Moore said he meant all of the TMFPD's vehicles had them. He felt they were not too expensive to add to a vehicle.

Councilmember Duerr felt the amendment to the bill was needed so we would not get complacent if we achieved automatic aid. She said she would like to see us work together on locating the next fire station to be built, and it might be best to sit together and debate the pros and cons. Chief Moore felt that would be wise. Councilmember Duerr felt together we would be stronger, because there would be more firefighters and apparatus to pull from. She said the amendment to the bill gave some direction to continue meeting, but did not say consolidation, and instead discussed how to better manage our regional fire together. She stated often getting people to work together could reduce overhead. Chief Moore commented a regional department did not always mean less expensive, but it would be more efficient and would serve the citizens better. Councilmember Duerr did not feel we would be reducing the number of trucks or people, but wanted to provide the best service to the people possible.

Reno City Councilmember David Bobzien asked Chief Moore to discuss the automatic aid agreement with the City of Sparks. Chief Moore said he sat down with the Sparks Fire Chief and looked at areas where they could help each other, which was then translated into fire response zones and dispatch processes, while being limited to the areas where it made sense. He said he saw automatic aid with the City of Reno as being in limited areas, because it would be the closest fire truck.

Councilmember Bobzien said he wanted to bring this around to consideration of the amendment, which would send a message to the Legislature we could work together on this. Chair Berkbigler advised the amendment was not on the agenda and the Commission could not take a position on it. She noted the Commission did not have another meeting scheduled until June 9, 2015. Councilmember Bobzien said he understood and noted the City of Reno supported the amendment.

Paul Lipparelli, Washoe County Legal Counsel, confirmed the Board could not take a position as a Board since the amendment was not on the agenda. He said automatic aid was a listed item and there could be a discussion about how it should work from which people might be able to discern the various viewpoints of the Councilmembers and the Commissioners.

Nancy Parent, County Clerk, placed a copy of the City of Reno's proposed amendment on the record.

Councilmember Bobzien encouraged the individual elected officials to express their opinion regarding the amendment to the Legislature as they saw fit.

In response to the call for public comment, Cliff Low said the City of Reno would not pass muster on telling the truth at yesterday's Legislative Session. He said the problem was not that the TMFPD did not renew the Interlocal Agreement, but that the Reno City Council cancelled the automatic aid agreement that predated the Interlocal Agreement. He said the question was how Reno residents would benefit from another Interlocal Agreement or a consolidation with the TMFPD, and would that provide any benefits that would not be provided by simply entering into a well-designed and comprehensive automatic aid agreement.

Tom Garrison, Sparks Fire Chief, said the City of Sparks would be impacted by any decisions made. He stated there were some inaccuracies about automatic aid, which he felt would contaminate the ability to make a well-informed decision. He stated the first was the need for a consolidated dispatch. He said the City of Sparks and the TMFPD did not have a consolidated dispatch now and they were on two separate CAD systems, but they had a wholesome and very workable automatic aid agreement. He confirmed there were delays in dispatching due to them not being on the same system, so phone calls were made and resources were duplicated. However, things were changing because the City of Sparks would be on Tiburon like the City of Reno and the TMFPD, and new procedures could be put into place where each dispatch center could dispatch the other agency's units, which meant it would not be necessary to dispatch two vehicles to an EMS call. He stated it was not necessary to have AVL to do automatic aid, even though AVL was the best possible system, because they already had common radio frequencies. He said most of the agencies operations were similar and they already trained together. He stated all of those things were posed as obstacles to automatic aid, but they were not obstacles. He said the bill did not address negotiating the automatic aid agreement, but it did not prohibit it either. He stated we could design what we wanted and in a very short timeframe, because it took two weeks to design the TMFPD/City of Sparks automatic aid agreement. He said there would be many obstacles to consolidation, such as the governance structure, the staffing models, the differences in the labor agreements, and the funding models. He stated it would take a lot of time to put a consolidated fire department in place, but automatic aid could be put in place within a month. He asked everyone to fully understand what the real and the fake obstacles were before making a decision. He said automatic aid was the right thing to do and was the first step.

Malachy Horan said automatic aid should be the key focus, because it would impact many of the residents of Washoe County. He requested SB 185 be approved without amendments. He said it would take time to do the consolidation, because the water consolidation negotiations took five years between the County and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA). He stated the City of Reno's and the TMFPD's funding sources were different and the City of Reno had significant unfunded liabilities. He said he would like to see the City of Reno have the cash in the bank to pay for those unfunded liabilities instead of someone who had no dealings on the issue having to pay for them. He said out of a \$70 million budget, the total savings would be \$320,000 if the merger happened. He stated he would not do a merger if that was the total savings that could be realized and, if the savings could not be found now, the savings would never be found in the future.

**4:35 p.m.** Chair Berkbigler left the meeting and Acting Chair Hartung assumed the gavel.

Sam Dehne said he was against the deconsolidation, but bringing in Chief Moore was one of the best things that happened. He stated the closest unit needed to go to the fire.

There was no action taken on this item.

**15-0424      AGENDA ITEM 7**

**Agenda Subject:** “Overview of Regional Fire Services: a. Presentation, discussion and potential direction to staff on the City of Reno Fire Department proposal for fire consolidation and b. Presentation, discussion and potential direction to staff on the Truckee Meadows/Sierra Fire Protection District proposal for fire consolidation, including but not limited to, an overview of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Regional Fire, 2014 -- Truckee Meadows-Sierra Fire Protection Districts/Washoe County, prepared by Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI).”

Dave Cochran, Reno Fire Department Interim Chief, conducted a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the regional fire service delivery enhancements, the proposed regional staffing model, the current regional redundant service areas, and the proposed regional fire model cost.

**4:45 p.m.** Chair Berkbigler returned and assumed the gavel.

Interim Chief Cochran continued the presentation by highlighting the fire regionalization formation options and the governance and administration model. He said regionalization would result in a higher and more efficient level of service at no additional cost and with no loss of jobs. A copy of the presentation was placed on file with the Clerk.

Chief Moore said ordinary citizens spent a considerable amount of time studying regionalization over six months from an unbiased and local perspective. He stated they brought in the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA), the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District (NLTFPD), and all of the regional fire departments including Storey County and North Lyon. He stated the study concluded the first step should be automatic aid. He said there were formidable obstacles to get to the point where we could be fully regionalized. He stated some of the obstacles were imbedded in service levels and they were certainly the issues of governance, funding, and labor.

Commissioner Hartung asked Interim Chief Cochran about listing the 2015-16 Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) budget as \$26,211,121, and he thought the budget as \$23.3 million. Michele Hobbs, Reno Fire Department Administrative Services Manager, said according to the TMFPD's State document, the budget was \$23.3 million. She said part of the costs included in looking at a regional model were the indirect costs for Human Resources, the District Attorney's Office, and so on for both the City of Reno and the TMFPD. She said to be self-sufficient, the Department would need to have legal services, personnel services, and all of the other costs required to be a self-supporting entity.

Reno City Councilmember Jenny Brekhus believed the consolidation of the fire services was not the answer, because it would lead to more fragmentation and uncoordinated governance for this region. She felt the City of Reno and the County needed to figure out what to do with the City of Sparks and Incline Village, so there would be one legislative body, which would provide the best results and was what the region deserved.

Commissioner Lucey asked what prompted the study besides the deconsolidation. Chief Moore said one of the most glaring issues was how many separate fire agencies the region had, because they were not necessarily coordinating their efforts. He stated doing a good job with fire response was not enough, because we also needed to do a good job with fire prevention and community outreach. He said it was obvious there were many agencies doing the same thing that there was duplication and overlap occurring.

Commissioner Lucey discussed the automatic aid advisory question on the ballot in 2012, which had a yes vote of 81 percent and 18 percent no. He asked if that ballot question was also part of this. Chief Moore said during the study everything was discussed and put in the proper order regarding the sequence of things that needed to happen to get from where we were at to what might be the ideal state of a regional department with one form of governance, an agreed upon service level, and a stable and fair funding source. He said they got to automatic aid first, because it would be a good first step and, when that was successful, then we could move on to the more difficult tasks.

Commissioner Lucey asked why the City of Reno did not participate in the Blue Ribbon Committee. Andrew Clinger, Reno City Manager, said the County was making the selections regarding who would be on the committee and if the City had been invited to participate in making those selections, the City would have been more than willing to participate. Commissioner Lucey asked if there was a study that both the County and the City of Reno participated in.

**4:50 p.m.** Chair Berkbigler left and Acting Chair Hartung assumed the gavel.

Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve said the City of Reno had a box full of studies, and that her issue was how many more studies needed to be done. Interim Chief Cochran stated the studies all concluded that a regional fire department was the best answer.

Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr said there was a study done during the consolidation that said it was working well. She stated it was hard to solve a problem if there was no understanding of what the problem was. Interim Chief Cochran said the consolidation seemed to work well. He said in response to the question if we could get there, his response was of course we could because we had been there already. Chief Moore responded finances were 99 percent of why the Interlocal could not be sustained. Councilmember Duerr said she was trying to understand the obstacle to consolidation. Chief Moore said the biggest obstacle was the cost of staffing. He stated if the TMFPD had not gone to flexible staffing, the projections were the TMFPD would be insolvent by this year. He said the flexible staffing enabled the TMFPD to keep all of the fire stations open; otherwise, three stations would have been closed, which would have been an issue because the stations in the north were located further apart. Councilmember Duerr asked if increasing revenues would provide an opportunity to provide a better level of service. Chief Moore said the District was working great with three-person crews, but he would like to have more firefighters. He stated he had to balance revenues and expenditures against the service levels, and it would cost 33 percent more to staff with four-person crews, which was money the TMFPD did not have.

Acting Chair Hartung said the thought process being put forward was a good one, but the process had to include the City of Sparks, the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District and the Reno-Tahoe Airport. He stated when businesses merged, a valuation had to be determined, which required each business to look at the valuation of the other business. He said all of the books must be open and examined by a third-party auditor. He said all of the variables needed to be known or it would be impossible to merge the entities, because there could be huge inequities on both sides. He stated he had no issue with regionalizing a lot of our resources, but what got in the way were people wanting to be in control. He said the question was could we get along. He stated if we could demonstrate we could work together, then everyone would want to climb on board with regionalization.

**5:10 p.m.** Chair Berkbigler returned and assumed the gavel.

In response to the call for public comment, Robert Parker spoke about the Reno Fire Department and the proposed consolidation. A copy of his comments was placed on file with the Clerk.

Cliff Low felt automatic aid was the answer and, if the automatic aid agreement was still in force, we would not be here today. He stated the City of Reno felt automatic aid meant their vehicles would be out of position, but he asked what was done now when multiple pieces of equipment were out dealing with an emergency. He believed the equipment was repositioned as needed to provide the best coverage possible.

Larry Simcoe said he agreed with Commissioner Hartung that everyone needed to talk to each other. He stated he worked for a fire department that started regionalizing in 1955 and resulted in a majority of the cities being under one umbrella. He said that was how to eliminate the duplication of services. He felt what was missing was the ability to communicate.

Cathy Brandhorst discussed issues of concern to herself.

There was no action taken on this item.

**15-0425      AGENDA ITEM 8**

**Agenda Subject:** “Discussion and potential direction by each governing board to its respective staff on possible dates and items for agendas for future Concurrent meetings relating to fire services.”

The City of Reno made and approved a motion to direct staff to work on an automatic aid agreement that would define the areas of coverage, cost reimbursements, dispatch, and building the fire stations. Also, Mayor Shieve and Chair Berkbigler would get together and define the timelines to get everything accomplished.

Reno City Councilmember Neoma Jardon requested staff obtain the automatic aid agreement, financial statistics, and feedback on how the agreement worked with the City of Sparks.

Reno City Councilmember Oscar Degado said we should continue the discussion on consolidation along with the discussions on automatic aid. Andrew Clinger, Reno City Manager, said there should be direction to staff to work with the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) on the financial models and staffing levels. Councilmember Degado said that would require a second motion. Mr. Clinger said this item was set up for the Council and the Commission to set future dates for meeting on this issue.

The City of Reno made and approved a motion to direct staff to continue to work with Washoe County regarding the financial models and staffing levels for the regional model.

Mr. Clinger said if the next meeting was in a month, staff could come back with more meaningful information. Mayor Schieve said a lot of the work was already done, and the City's fire experts believed they could put everything together relatively quickly.

The City of Reno made and approved a motion to hold the next concurrent meeting on Monday, June 15, 2015 in the afternoon.

For the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District Board of Fire Commissioners and the Board of County Commissioners, on motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Jung absent, it was ordered that staff be authorized to meet with the staff from the City of Reno to outline the process of automatic aid and the timeline to implement it.

In response to the call for public comment, Cliff Low asked if the City of Reno should consider taking a new position on SB 185 based on their motion to enter into discussions regarding automatic aid.

Commissioner Hartung asked if the meeting on June 15th would be about the progress made on automatic aid or regionalization. Mr. Clinger replied it depended on the County's position because he heard a motion regarding automatic aid, but had not heard a motion to explore the viability of the financial and operational standpoint on regionalization. He said that could be a second item on the agenda if the County made that motion.

Commissioner Hartung felt that when having a discussion about true regionalization, we should at least invite all of our regional partners to get their feedback. He said he would like to have staff collectively have conversations about what regionalization could look like.

Councilmember Jardon said she would hate to have the talks about regionalization bogged down due to others not wanting to participate. She felt we should represent to them that we would work together, and they would hopefully choose to join us. Chair Berkbigler believed the motion was for the different staffs to get together to do what was just suggested. She felt an appropriate motion for the Commission would be to direct staff to discuss the issues around a regional fire department. Mr. Clinger said the direction he heard was to meet with TMFPD staff and the County Manager to dive into details of the model the City of Reno proposed and to work through any questions or issues. He felt that work should be done first and then the regional partners could be invited to the discussion. Paul Lipparelli, Washoe County Legal Counsel, said the County needed a motion on regionalization, because the first motion only covered automatic aid. He stated Reno's motion proposed using their proposal for the basis of the discussion, and the Commission might want to consider adding the recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Committee, so all of the options could be discussed.

For the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District Board of Fire Commissioners and the Board of County Commissioners, on motion by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Chair Berkbigler, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Jung absent, it was ordered that staff enter into a discussion to look at perimeters for a merger that could look like regionalization and include the Blue Ribbon study and information supplied by Chief Moore in the conversation.

Commissioner Hartung asked if June 15th would be too soon for staff to deal with regionalization, because there was a lot of information to sift through. Commissioner Lucey asked if the motion could be vague enough to allow having a concurrent meeting with the City of Reno regarding fire services in general. Mr. Lipparelli said this agenda item allowed giving direction on future dates for meetings. He felt the Board would not want to depart from the usual process for formulating agendas for concurrent meetings, and the direction to staff would be to follow that process to formulate the June 15, 2015 agenda.

For the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District Board of Fire Commissioners and the Board of County Commissioners, Commissioner Hartung made a motion that ordered there would be a concurrent meeting on June 15, 2015 to discuss automatic aid and to have staff and the two Managers work together with respect to future dates for additional conversations. Mr. Lipparelli said that would not authorize discussing any other subject. Chair Berkbigler asked if the maker of the motion would be willing to amend the motion to say automatic aid and other fire services. Commissioner Hartung amended the motion. Chair Berkbigler seconded the amended motion, which duly carried with Commissioner Jung absent.

Councilmember Duerr complimented the County on its willingness to meet on these topics.

For the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District Board of Fire Commissioners and the Board of County Commissioners, on motion by Chair Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Jung absent, staff was ordered to include dispatch issues as they related to fire services in the discussions.

## **15-0426      AGENDA ITEM 9**

**Agenda Subject:** “Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to three minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Board of County Commissioners agenda. The Board of County Commissioners will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Commission, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Commission, Sierra Fire Protection District Commission, and Reno City Council as a whole.”

Deborah Sheltra stated she would like to see the Commissioners oppose the City of Reno's proposed amendment, because it would gut the intent of SB 185. She spoke about the City of Reno not participating in the Blue Ribbon Task Force, the tax increase, and the City of Reno's lack of advanced live support (ALS).

Cathy Brandhorst spoke about issues of concern to herself.

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**5:58 p.m.** There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Commissioner Lucey, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Jung absent, the meeting was adjourned.

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**MARSHA BERKBIGLER**, Chair  
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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**NANCY PARENT**, County Clerk and  
Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

*Minutes Prepared by:  
Jan Frazetta, Deputy County Clerk*