

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
SIERRA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

TUESDAY

10:00 A.M.

JANUARY 26, 2010

PRESENT:

David Humke, Chairman*
Bonnie Weber, Vice Chairperson
Robert Larkin, Commissioner
Kitty Jung, Commissioner
John Breternitz, Commissioner

Nancy Parent, Chief Deputy Clerk (11:09 – 11:38 am.)
Amy Harvey, County Clerk (11:38 a.m. – 12:26 p.m.)
Katy Simon, County Manager
Melanie Foster, Legal Counsel
Michael Greene, Fire Chief

11:09 a.m. The Board convened simultaneously as the Board of County Commissioners, the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Sierra Fire Protection District, and the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District with all members present. The following business was conducted in regular session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada:

10-01SF AGENDA ITEM 3

Agenda Subject: “Review of draft Fire and Fire Based Emergency Medical Services Master Plan Executive Summary and possible direction to staff to post the draft plan at www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/fireplan.html on the Washoe County web site, make copies of the plan available via CD to interested parties, receive public comment and return to the Board/s’ February 23, 2010 meeting with a presentation of the plan inclusive of staff recommendations. (All Commission Districts)”

Kurt Latipow, Fire Services Coordinator, thanked the Board for embarking on the master planning process. He indicated the intent was to post the draft Master Plan on the County website for public comment.

Mike Warren of Diamante Partners conducted a PowerPoint presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk. Chief Warren indicated the Diamante Partners began looking at Washoe County fire services and fire based emergency medical services (EMS) in February 2009. He referenced the Executive Summary and final draft of the Master Plan, which included a series of recommendations for improving and/or enhancing current services governed by the Board. A copy of the final draft, entitled the *Fire and Fire Based Emergency Medical Services Master Plan*, was placed on file with

the Clerk. Chief Warren explained the draft Master Plan and an analysis of fire station locations was included in Section I of the document. Section II contained Standards of Cover Reports for the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD), Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) and Washoe County Volunteer Fire Agencies (WCVFA). The financial analysis in Section III included current finances and recommendations for efficiencies.

Chief Warren outlined five themes or task areas that were addressed in the draft Master Plan: fire suppression/operations, fire prevention, fire based EMS, administration/management and governance, and financial structure and impacts. He noted extensive meetings were held to get input and participation from community stakeholders, private individuals, professional organizations, labor groups, and County staff. He acknowledged the administration of the Reno Fire Department (RFD) for their participation with respect to the TMFPD stations managed under an Interlocal Agreement. He pointed out the County fire services were challenged by a geographically large and diverse area, budget issues, and constituent demands. Chief Warren touched on some of the major issues that were identified on pages 10 and 11 of the draft Master Plan, including: governance and the ability to participate in critical actions and decisions through the Interlocal Agreement, response outside jurisdictional boundaries, concerns about volunteer firefighters, fire station sites and locations, and the inability to assess performance due to lack of dispatch information. He emphasized that averages were not an optimal way to measure performance and strongly encouraged the implementation of a system that would utilize fractile response measures to set performance standards. He reviewed the key issues and recommendations as summarized on pages 12 through 14 of the draft Master Plan. Chief Warren observed there were several strengths in the current system. He said the 800 MHz radio system was outstanding, the regional fire communication center was tops, the Interlocal Agreement provided economies of scale and a foundation for collaboration, the fire company staff met NFPA 1700 standards, and there was a high level of community satisfaction.

Commissioner Larkin asked about the next steps in the process. Chief Warren stated the contractual participation of Diamante Partners was concluded with the delivery of the draft Master Plan report. He indicated the consultants would be pleased to come back to help work through public comments at the Board's meeting on February 23, 2010. If the Board chose to look at a joint powers authority or some other form of governance in the future, he suggested a facilitator would help with the process. Chief Latipow said staff would dig into the 400-page report before making recommendations on February 23rd. He noted a formal presentation was scheduled before the Joint Fire Advisory Board (JFAB) on February 4th.

Commissioner Jung observed there were areas of concern related to size, money and constituent demands. She wondered what changes were identified in terms of what the constituents expected from the fire services. Chief Warren replied nothing had really changed but there were competing issues brought on by the loss of revenues and the economic situation that everyone was struggling with. He stated there was a constituent demand for increased services in some cases. He indicated Diamante's

surveys and community discussions found there was a large interest in improving or increasing the fire based EMS portion of service delivery.

Commissioner Breternitz said it was important to be proactive and provide the draft Master Plan to the Reno City Council. He suggested a community-wide meeting in a less formal atmosphere was a better forum than the Commission meeting for discussing the complex report. Commissioner Weber agreed. County Manager Katy Simon indicated a copy of the report had been provided to all of the fire service partners as well as to the City of Reno staff. She stated a public workshop was a great idea. Chief Latipow asked that any workshop be held close to the February 23, 2010 Commission meeting in order to minimize the consultants' costs. Chairman Humke suggested February 22nd. Commissioner Breternitz asked that the draft Master Plan document also be given to the City of Sparks. Chairman Humke said he was interested in talking with citizens to find out what they had gleaned from the report before it went to the County's partners. Ms. Simon stated compact discs (CD's) containing the report would be made available for checkout from the library. Commissioner Weber requested that some paper copies also be made available through the Manager's Office.

Rick Martinez of Diamante Partners acknowledged the complexity of the project and the contributions of many people and fire service agencies. In particular, he recognized the efforts of TMFPD Interim Fire Chief Tim Alameda, SFPD Fire Chief Michael Greene, and Financial Consultant Mary Walker. He stated there was a tremendous opportunity because the public was engaged and all of the stakeholder groups were interested in moving forward and collaborating in a productive and meaningful way.

In response to the call for public comment, Jim Gubbels, Vice President of the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA), said his agency had some concerns about the recommendations in the Executive Summary. The agency's written comments were distributed to the Board and placed on file with the Clerk. Mr. Gubbels described REMSA's system as a nationally recognized high performance EMS model that was designed specifically for Washoe County by EMS experts. He said REMSA received no tax support and specialized in the practice of medicine with patient care as its focus. He pointed out REMSA had been doing fractile reporting for 23 years. He suggested the implementation of emergency medical dispatch at the Reno 911 Center would be an expensive redundancy to the current system. He referenced a research study (attached to REMSA's written comments) that demonstrated concerns about fire based paramedic service. He emphasized REMSA would participate in the process to suggest alternatives for reducing fire based EMS costs without compromising patient care.

Robert Ackerman read a statement, which was placed on file with the Clerk. He stated the Galena Forest residents had been anxiously awaiting the release of the Diamante report. He noted the Executive Summary failed to identify staffing for Fire Station 39 on Joy Lake Road, which was critical to response times in the area. He pointed out that the draft Master Plan recommendations could not happen under the current TMFPD/City of Reno contract. He encouraged renegotiation of the contract to allow for the creation of a new organization such as a joint powers authority.

Pete Cannizzaro, President of the Washoe County Volunteer Fireman's Association and Chief of the Galena Volunteer Fire Department, indicated the majority of the volunteer fire departments were skeptical of the Diamante Executive Summary but were withholding comment until the draft Master Plan had been fully studied. He noted historical precedent had been set to develop and implement recommendations of the study using a committee approach with Board approval. He stated he was confident that could happen with the participation of a local facilitator and all of the factions who were involved. Mr. Cannizzaro's written comments were placed on file with the Clerk.

Donna Peterson of Saint James Village said she was encouraged by some of the findings in the Executive Summary but was concerned there was no mention of the need to staff the fire station on Joy Lake Road. Although invited to do so, she did not know if the consultants visited the Galena-Saint James Village area in order to understand the location of the fire station, the distribution of homes and population, and the projected run times. She emphasized the residents in the area were not satisfied with the status quo, and staffing of the Joy Lake and Arrowcreek fire stations was critical to providing life saving services within eight minutes. She supported review and amendment of the current contract with the City of Reno if it would provide critical response times throughout Washoe County. Ms. Peterson's written comments were placed on file with the Clerk.

Sara Thomas, a resident of the Arrowcreek community, observed many citizens had come before the Board over the past 18 months to resolve the problem of emergency response times far exceeding the recognized standard of eight minutes. She was pleased that the consultant's study addressed the need for a joint fire authority and the need for a fire station in the Arrowcreek area. She asked the Fire Commissioners to resolve the remaining issue of staffing the Arrowcreek and Joy Lake Road fire stations. She indicated the residents would support efforts to establish a joint fire authority that could use funds more efficiently for everyone in the County and definitely wanted to participate in the suggested community workshop.

Alex Kukulis, President of the Sierra Firefighters Association, acknowledged these were incredibly difficult times for local governments. He noted there were recent layoffs and potential station closures within the Reno Fire Department and in Storey County. He thanked the Board for making public safety an essential priority. He observed the community's 400 firefighters were a large group of stakeholders who recognized the importance of the Diamante study. He hoped the process would involve everyone, including the community, the volunteers and the chief officers.

Michael Greene, SFPD Fire Chief, thanked the Board. He agreed with comments made by Commissioner Larkin at a previous leadership seminar that there was a once in a decade opportunity to shape the future of public safety and fire services in Washoe County. He noted the SFPD had been designed for a completely different type of operation under the Nevada Division of Forestry before it was taken over and stabilized by Washoe County, which enabled the citizens and everyone else to be a part of its

reshaping. He said he looked forward to reading all 400 pages of the draft Master Plan and becoming a subject matter expert so that he could bring forward constructive solutions. He indicated there was a large pool of expertise in the community and it was crucial to get everyone in the boat and rowing the same way. He stated EMS was a large part of the SFPD's services and advanced life support (ALS) service in the outlying areas was critical to saving lives. He hoped all of the issues would be looked at through the lens of objectivity with a focus on community service.

Tim Alameda, Interim Fire Chief for the Reno Fire Department (RFD) and the TMFPD, said his agency wanted the opportunity to look at the entire draft Master Plan document, be part of the leadership process, and be part of the work process going forward. He observed the RFD was a big outfit, running from Washoe Valley to Cold Springs, with significant fire responses in the downtown area, the rural areas and the suburban areas.

John Howe, Board Member of the Washoe County Volunteer Firefighters Association and President of the Board of the Silver Lake Volunteer Fire Department, said he was disappointed that Chief Cannizzaro was not given five minutes to speak as the representative of a group. Although the consultants' working group met with the volunteers, he stated their input was not used as much as was expected in the Diamante report. He indicated volunteers should be utilized in the field. He related the story of a volunteer fire department being dispatched to the scene of a structure fire and canceled en route. Later, the career captain who was in command of the scene said to the volunteer fire chief: "Where were you guys? I could have used you." Mr. Howe indicated that such incidents happened a lot and illustrated the types of problems that were being overlooked.

Commissioner Weber hoped that representatives of a group would be identified in advance and allowed to speak for five minutes if a workshop was to be held. Chairman Humke pointed out the Commission was recently "burned" on the five minute rule and it would have to be looked at very carefully.

Commissioner Jung requested that a direct link to the draft Master Plan remain on the front page of the County website until after the public workshop so that people did not have to memorize the address. Chief Latipow agreed.

On motion by Commissioner Larkin, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that the plan presented to the Board on CD, marked the *Fire and Fire Based Emergency Medical Services Master Plan, January 2010*, would hereafter be referred to as "The Draft Plan" so there would be no confusion that the Board of County Commissioners had made any final decisions related to it. Staff was directed to post The Draft Plan to the Washoe County website at www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/fireplan.html, make copies of The Draft Plan available to interested parties by CD, receive public comment, and return on February 23, 2010 to the Board of County Commissioners, the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Sierra Fire Protection District and the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Truckee Meadows Fire

Protection District. Kurt Latipow, Fire Services Coordinator, was authorized to schedule a public workshop prior to the February 23rd Board meeting.

***12:06 p.m.** Chairman Humke temporarily left the meeting and Vice Chairperson Weber assumed the gavel. The Board reconvened as the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Sierra Fire Protection District with Chairman Humke absent.

10-02SF AGENDA ITEM 2A

Agenda Subject: “Approval of Agenda for the January 26, 2010 SFPD Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting.”

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Breternitz, seconded by Commissioner Larkin, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 2A be approved.

10-03SF AGENDA ITEM 2B

Agenda Subject: “Chief’s Report.”

Fire Chief Michael Greene said he met with Senator Harry Reid’s staff to get assistance for finding the additional funds necessary to complete the Arrowcreek Fire Station. He explained the proposed fire station design had been built twice before. He submitted the budget and actual costs to Senator Reid’s staff to help with an explanation of allowable and non-allowable expenses based on the Department of Homeland Security grant guidelines. He stated he hoped to have an answer soon and would update the Board at a future meeting.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Breternitz, seconded by Commissioner Larkin, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 2B be accepted.

10-04SF AGENDA ITEM 2C

Agenda Subject: “Approval of Volunteer Reports.”

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Breternitz, seconded by Commissioner Larkin, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 2C be accepted.

10-05SF AGENDA ITEM 2D

Agenda Subject: “Approval of minutes from December 8, 2009 regular meeting.”

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Breternitz, seconded by Commissioner Larkin, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 2D be approved.

10-06SF AGENDA ITEM 4

Agenda Subject: “Discussion of Fiscal Year 2009-10 Financial Status of the Sierra Fire Protection District.”

Fire Chief Michael Greene reported the District started the fiscal year with \$500,000 and hoped to finish the year with the same ending balance. He suggested the balance might offset any declining revenues.

No action was taken on this agenda item.

10-07SF AGENDA ITEM 5

Agenda Subject: “Discussion and Board expectations for staff plan on developing priorities and goals based upon District functions, nationally recognized service benchmarks and data to make recommendations for establishing the FY 2010-11 Budget.”

Fire Chief Michael Greene stated an internal budget committee had been established and was meeting weekly. He said he was excited to see the completion of the Diamante study and anticipated coming forward with some recommended budget priorities and service priorities.

Commissioner Jung asked who was on the internal budget committee. Chief Greene indicated the committee included Alex Kukulis of the Sierra Firefighters Association, a representative from fire prevention and a representative from the Battalion Chiefs Association. He stated the meetings were facilitated by Financial Consultant Mary Walker and were open to anyone in the District who wanted to attend. Additionally, he noted an internal survey was being done to get suggestions about cost saving measures and priorities.

No action was taken on this agenda item.

10-08SF AGENDA ITEM 6

Agenda Subject: “Recognition and award of a Certificate of Appreciation for Verdi Volunteer Firefighter Kim Toulouse’s 34 years of fire and community service.”

Fire Chief Michael Greene thanked Verdi volunteer firefighter Kim Toulouse for his 34 years of service. Mr. Toulouse was severely burned in a fire on September 17, 1983 and returned to serve with the Verdi Volunteer Fire Department after two years of rehabilitation. Chief Greene pointed out Mr. Toulouse’s many other contributions to the community, including service as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Nevada Department of Fish and Game, head of a statewide volunteer coordination program, and work on incident management teams with the Department of Emergency Management. Vice Chairperson Weber read and presented a plaque to Mr. Toulouse.

Mr. Toulouse said he was accepting the plaque on behalf of all of the volunteers out there who deserved recognition. He observed that people volunteered out of a sense of service to their community, their neighbors and their friends. He pointed out the Board had an opportunity to create a world class fire district and, if implemented, the recommendations in the draft *Fire and Fire Based Emergency Medical Services Master Plan* would go a long way toward creating such an organization. He stated he could not wait to delve into the details of the Plan and make his own set of recommendations. He indicated the expertise of the career staff and the volunteers should be utilized. He hoped the Board would not sell the volunteers short. He said he had been deployed to Hurricane Katrina, the Wells earthquake and other disaster sites, and trained help was an absolute necessity when disaster struck. Mr. Toulouse suggested the Board take advantage of the volunteers, train them up, get them ready to go, and keep them involved.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 6 be accepted and approved.

10-09SF AGENDA ITEM 7

Agenda Subject: “Commissioner’s/Managers Announcements, Requests for Information, Topics for Future Agendas and Statements Relating to Items Not on the Agenda. (No discussion among Commissioners will take place on this item.)”

Commissioner Larkin requested future agenda items to discuss the District’s assessment and readiness for the spring fire season, as well as how the RAVEN program had been integrated into the District’s fire attack plans.

10-10SF AGENDA ITEM 8

Agenda Subject: “Public Comment and discussion thereon.”

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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12:26 p.m. There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion by Commissioner Breternitz, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, the meeting was adjourned.

BONNIE WEBER, Vice Chairperson
Sierra Fire Protection District

ATTEST:

AMY HARVEY, Washoe County Clerk and
Ex Officio Clerk, Sierra Fire Protection District

*Minutes Prepared by:
Lisa McNeill, Deputy County Clerk*