

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS, SIERRA FOREST FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT

TUESDAY

2:00 P.M.

JANUARY 14, 2003

PRESENT:

David Humke, Chairman
Jim Shaw, Vice Chairman
Jim Galloway, Commissioner
Pete Sferrazza, Commissioner
Bonnie Weber, Commissioner

Amy Harvey, County Clerk
Katy Singlaub, County Manager
Madelyn Shipman, Legal Counsel
Tim Rochelle, Acting Regional Forester

The Board met in regular session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada, and conducted the following business:

***Commissioner Galloway temporarily left the meeting.**

MINUTES

Legal Counsel Madelyn Shipman advised that Commissioner Galloway would need to be present to vote on the approval of the July 9, 2002 minutes, as Chairman Humke and Commissioner Weber were not present at that meeting. Chairman Humke continued this item to later in the meeting.

AGENDA

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Commissioner Sferrazza, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Galloway temporarily absent, Chairman Humke ordered that the agenda for the January 14, 2003 meeting be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sam Dehne, Reno resident, discussed concerns regarding the recent ruling by a local Federal Judge concerning what citizens can and cannot say during Public Comments at public meetings. He then said he was fined \$2,500 by the Secretary of State because he forgot to file his campaign report, and he believes this massive fine represents an abuse of power by the Secretary of State. He noted that his campaign report contained all zeros.

***Commissioner Galloway returned to the meeting.**

MINUTES

On motion by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Commissioner Sferrazza, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke and Commissioner Weber abstaining, it was ordered that the minutes for the July 9, 2002 regular meeting be approved.

03-01SF REPORT OF DISTRICT ACTIVITY

Tim Rochelle, Acting Regional Forester, Division of Forestry, Western Region, advised the Sierra Forest Fire Protection District received a grant, the largest of its kind in the State, to help augment and procure equipment and facilities for the 800 MHz conversion.

Forester Rochelle commented that, at the last meeting, the Board requested information concerning whether the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA) scenic regulations comply with National Fire Protection Act Fire Codes. He advised this issue is currently with the Attorney General's office for clarification and to determine the authority of the State Division of Forestry versus TRPA codes and ordinances. He said a report will be provided to the Board on this issue as soon as the information is available.

03-02SF DISCUSSION - ISSUANCE OF BURNING PERMITS

Tim Rochelle, Acting Regional Forester, provided a memorandum setting forth the number of burning permits issued in Washoe County in 2002. He said 180 burning permits were issued last year and provided a copy of the Division of Forestry's Burning Permit document and a copy of Nevada Revised Statute 473.090 concerning burning regulations.

Commissioner Sferrazza advised the Galena homeowners have requested that the Board take formal action on the issue of burning permits for their area. He said he would want to continue this item to provide the opportunity for Galena homeowners to be present to discuss their issues regarding burning in their area.

Chairman Humke advised he reviewed the correspondence from the Galena homeowners regarding their concerns about burning in their area and noted that people have spoken repeatedly on this matter at their Citizen Advisory Board meetings.

Commissioner Galloway stated this matter represents a double-edged sword because, if burning is not allowed and people let wood and brush accumulate, a fire hazard is created. He said the problem of creating a fire hazard may need to be weighed against the short-term risk of burning. Commissioner Galloway then stated he heard that at least one homeowner's association in the area requires people to have shake roofs, and he would like to know if this is the case. He commented that other methods,

such as roofing, may be implemented to make things less hazardous for people in the Galena area.

Chairman Humke requested that Mr. Rochelle research the issues discussed today and provide information regarding those matters to the Board.

Mr. Rochelle then responded to questions of the Board regarding the Division of Forestry's role relative to controlled burns and burn permits.

Commissioner Galloway asked if the District received objections from residents about burns and whether there was an indication the residents would have a different opinion about burns conducted by the District. He asked, if the District were to conduct burns to remediate the situation, would a cost shift onto the County taxpayers occur or would there be another way to recover the expense. Forester Rochelle said they would like to educate the public, and there are a number of alternatives to burning. He stated he would get back to the Board regarding the question about the recovery of expenses.

In answer to Commissioner Sferrazza, Forester Rochelle stated the State Forester Firewarden, in cooperation with other agencies, institutes a no-burn season. He said the season of no burning is approximately six months of the year, but this varies depending on weather conditions; and the Division of Forestry urges caution year round.

On motion by Commissioner Sferrazza, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion duly carried, Chairman Humke ordered that this item be continued to provide the opportunity for representatives from the Galena area to be present to discuss their concerns.

COMMISSIONERS'/STAFF'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Galloway said he was pleased to see that the Sierra Club issued a statement to the media indicating they would like more priority given to positive actions to prevent fire risks in forested areas. He said he would hope this is a shift on policy by people nationwide to balance their concern about trees and wildlife habitat against the risk to human life and property.

Commissioner Weber said she believes the residents of Verdi should be included in the discussions about burning because a number of permits are issued in that area. Chairman Humke requested that staff notify the Galena and Verdi areas about the discussion to be held regarding the issuance of burning permits.

EMERGENCY ITEMS

There were no emergency items.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned.

DAVID E. HUMKE, Chairman
Sierra Forest Fire Protection District

ATTEST:

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

*Minutes Prepared By
Barbara Trow, Deputy County Clerk*