

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

TUESDAY

2:00 P.M.

MARCH 11, 2003

PRESENT:

Jim Galloway, Commissioner
Pete Sferrazza, Commissioner
Bonnie Weber, Commissioner

Nancy Parent, Chief Deputy County Clerk
Katy Singlaub, County Manager
Madelyn Shipman, Legal Counsel
Tim Rochelle, Acting Regional Forester

ABSENT:

David Humke, Chairman
Jim Shaw, Vice Chairman

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:

03-03SF AGENDA

On motion by Commissioner Sferrazza, seconded by Commissioner Galloway, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke and Commissioner Shaw absent, Commissioner Weber was elected as Acting Chair for the meeting.

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Sferrazza, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke and Commissioner Shaw absent, Acting Chair Weber ordered that the agenda for the March 11, 2003 meeting be approved.

MINUTES

On motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Sferrazza, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke and Commissioner Shaw absent, Acting Chair Weber ordered that the minutes of the regular meetings of December 10, 2002 and January 14, 2003 be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sam Dehne, Reno resident, complimented Acting Chair Weber for chairing the meeting. He also agreed with Congressman Jim Gibbons' idea to use the

Nevada Air Guard airplanes to fight forest fires. He then discussed the Reno City Council reducing the number of City Council meetings.

Gary Schmidt, Washoe County resident, requested when the Board of County Commissioners convene as other entities, such as Board of Fire Commissioners, agendas be made available at the meeting.

03-04SF REPORT – DISTRICT ACTIVITY

Tim Rochelle, Acting Regional Forester, said over the past two months, there was a minor structure fire in the Verdi area with no injuries.

03-05SF REPORT – BURNING PERMITS & FUEL REDUCTION ALTERNATIVES

Tim Rochelle, Acting Regional Forester, stated Sierra Forest Fire Protection District recommends effective building codes, statutes and other regulations that include fire hazard reduction requirements to motivate communities to take responsibility for reducing their vulnerability to wildfires. He further said engine companies provide permits and perform inspections. Mr. Rochelle said there is an increase in communication with the public; government agencies cannot manage the increase alone; and they need to secure national, responsible partners. He said the website, www.firewise.org, is a good reference to assist homeowners in education and prevention. He stated Galena and Verdi homeowners were contacted concerning this meeting.

Commissioner Galloway asked if NRS 473 gives the County Commission the authority to be more restrictive and ban permits, and Mr. Rochelle stated not in its current text. Commissioner Galloway said without a change in State law, it would be inappropriate to ask the County Commission to pass an ordinance banning burns.

Bill Isert, Galena Forest Homeowners' Association, said the Association thinks only professionals should be allowed to provide sources of ignition in backyards. He stated there are safer ways for homeowners to reduce the forested products on their lots other than burning. He also said he has talked with other Associations, one in Truckee brings in dumpsters once a year, and the Galena Forest Homeowners' Association has filed for a grant with the Federal Government to do the same.

Commissioner Galloway said, if burning is banned, alternatives to remove excessive fuel from lots needs to be in place. He stated homeowners' associations, could develop rules providing for alternative methods of disposal and require homeowners to use that method. He also suggested gathering enough signatures to establish a special assessment district that would pay for the extra level of service to guarantee fuel loads are hauled away. Mr. Isert responded people could bag it up and set it out for garbage pick-up.

Madelyn Shipman, Assistant District Attorney, said she would need to research legislative history, but if she had to render an opinion, it could be implied the Statute intends that professionals in the service provide, establish and enforce regulations. Commissioner Galloway stated the law provides permits may be issued or curtailed according to Fire District staff. Ms. Shipman said the law authorizes the State Fire Warden to establish the regulations. Commissioner Galloway told Mr. Isert if he was able to convince the Fire Warden burning was an unsound practice, the Fire Warden could then discontinue granting burn permits. He stated his concern is that if burns were curtailed, people would not clean up excess brush. Commissioner Galloway also said the burden of service ought to be paid by the people who benefit from the service, through homeowners' associations or an assessment district. In response to Commissioner Sferrazza, Mr. Isert said his Homeowners' Association would like the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) to not issue burn permits in the residential forested area. He stated the Association has attempted to pass a rule banning burning, but it is impossible to get the required vote. Katy Singlaub, County Manager, stated the Board previously elected to not take action concerning this matter, affirmed the procedure used by the NDF currently, and determined the no-burn permit seasonal prohibition was an adequate protection. Commissioner Galloway said, based on the information presented today, he would not support no burning because he fears the consequence of fuel loads accumulating would become a greater hazard. Commissioner Sferrazza requested Ms. Singlaub provide him with minutes of the meeting when the Board confirmed NDF's procedures.

Robert Cameron, Washoe County resident, said a lot of people in the area where he lives do burn. He stated NDF's approach is reasonable and he is in favor of burning.

**03-06SF REPORT – PREVENTION BUREAU – SHAKE ROOFS
REQUIRED BY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS**

Tim Rochelle, Acting Regional Forester, said NRS 472.100 overrides CC&R's that may require shake shingle roofing material in fire hazard areas.

3:55 p.m. Commissioner Sferrazza temporarily left the meeting.

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THERE WAS NO LONGER A QUORUM
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Captain Rich Riolo appeared before the Board concerning this item.

03-07SF REPORT – FUELS REMOVAL PROJECTS

Tim Rochelle discussed various grants available.

COMMISSIONERS’/MANAGER’S COMMENTS

Acting Chair Weber advised agendas were provided at the meeting but apparently ran out.

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

BONNIE WEBER, Acting Chair
Sierra Forest Fire Protection District

ATTEST:

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

*Minutes Prepared By
Melissa M. Ayrault, Deputy County Clerk*