

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

TUESDAY

2:00 P.M.

MAY 11, 2004

PRESENT:

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

Amy Harvey, County Clerk
Katy Singlaub, County Manager
Madelyn Shipman, Assistant District Attorney
Tim Rochelle, Western 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:

04-03SF AGENDA

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Weber, which motion duly carried, Chairman Shaw ordered that the agenda for the May 11, 2004 meeting be approved.

04-04SF REPORT OF DISTRICT ACTIVITY

Tim Rochelle, Western Regional Forester, went over the highlights from the District Activity report for January through April 2004. He also discussed the Nevada Division of Forestry Western Region 2003 Seasonal Firefighter Program report that highlighted last season's activities.

Commissioner Weber requested the reports be provided to the Board prior to the meeting.

**04-05SF REQUEST TO HIRE FOUR ADDITIONAL SEASONAL
FIREFIGHTERS**

Jay Cwiak, Nevada Division of Forestry Firefighters Association Local 3895 President, stated there were concerns on where the funding was coming from for the four additional seasonal firefighters. He requested the Board not make a decision until the funding is identified and how it will effect other funding.

Tim Rochelle, Western Regional Forester, said salary savings from vacant positions have been identified as the funding source. He said it is critical they get the four additional seasonal firefighters bringing the total to nine.

Commissioner Galloway explained to members of the public in attendance that Alternative Seven is the staff recommended alternative to the administrative and financial challenges faced by the Sierra Forest Fire Protection District that have been caused by city expansion and by more and more residents moving into its territory.

Commissioner Humke said he received an e-mail from Mr. Cwiak suggesting these seasonal positions be for nine months, but he also cited a rule that stated if the position is longer than six months, it triggers retirement benefits. Chief Rochelle replied the issue was being investigated. Commissioner Humke stated he liked that the seasonal firefighters provide other services to Nevada residents besides fighting fires such as public and landowner education and prevention activities.

Chairman Shaw asked if these seasonal positions had in the past been for six months, and Chief Rochelle replied yes. He stated it is vital for their training that the seasonal firefighters be hired before the start of the Wildfire Training Academy on May 17th.

Mary Walker, Walker and Associates, clarified the seasonal firefighters have always been six months. The intent is to, as funding becomes available, have three five-person crews that would be six months seasonal but stagger the hiring so there is nine months of coverage. She advised the problem with nine-month seasonals is they cannot get a job for the remaining three months so they collect unemployment and the District ends up paying for 12 months.

Commissioner Galloway asked if the staggering would work for six months right now. Ms. Walker replied yes.

Chief Rochelle said he would like to clarify a previous statement about the Battalion Chief vacancy. He stated until it is decided what positions and funding will be needed, they do not want to make a commitment to filling positions, even for one season.

Commissioner Sferrazza asked Chief Rochelle if he had a problem with seasonal firefighters not having benefits because he was against hiring firefighters without benefits whether or not they were seasonal. Chief Rochelle answered the concern was taking funding away from the year-round firefighters that provide all risk services.

Chairman Shaw stated he had concerns about delaying hiring any longer and not having the manpower available to fight fires.

Ms. Walker said the funding would be available for four seasonal positions, both in the study and in the budget.

Upon recommendation of Chief Rochelle, on motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Humke, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Sferrazza voting "no," Chairman Shaw ordered that four additional seasonal firefighters be hired for six-month terms.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, discussed his perception of Reno's attempt to raid the Commission by funding candidates to run against some of the Board members.

Gary Schmidt, local resident, criticized the Secretary of State and the Federal government for placing unfunded mandates on the County.

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

JAMES M. SHAW, Chairman
Sierra Forest Fire Protection District

ATTEST:

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

*Minutes Prepared by
Jan Frazzetta, Deputy County Clerk*