

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

TUESDAY

11:00 a.m.

OCTOBER 25, 2011

PRESENT:

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

**Nancy Parent, Chief Deputy Clerk**  
**Katy Simon, County Manager**  
**Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel**  
**Michael Greene, Fire Chief**

The Board convened at 11:28 a.m. 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 Larkin participated in the meeting by telephone.

**11:28 a.m.** The Board convened as the Board of Fire Commissioners for both the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) and the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) to hear Agenda Item 6.

**11-143SF     AGENDA ITEM 6**

**Agenda Subject:** “Discussion of the cost-benefit analysis of, as well as, alternatives for consolidating the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection and Sierra Fire Protection Districts, acknowledge proposed level of service, select an alternative for consolidation of administration and operations of the Districts, and direction to staff. (All Commission Districts).”

This item was heard under the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District agenda for October 25, 2011, Agenda Item 5.

**12:19 p.m.** The Board recessed.

**12:30 p.m.** The Board reconvened with all members present.

**11-138SF     AGENDA ITEM 2**

**Agenda Subject:** “Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to two minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the

**Commission agenda. The District will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to two minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the District as a whole.”**

Tom Motherway expressed his thanks to Michael Greene, Fire Chief, for his excellent service to the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) and to Washoe County as a whole. He stated the Chief took over a fire district that was sometimes forgotten and sometimes used as an annexation piñata by the City of Reno. He said the Chief organized the SFPD, established good labor relations, and provided a future vision that would provide fuller service to more people. He wished Chief Green good health and said he would be sorely missed.

Mr. Motherway commended the Commissioners on the action taken during the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection (TMFPD) Agenda Item 5, because putting two Districts together was the first step towards regionalization. He noted most calls were emergency medical calls, and it would be good to have a cross-trained paramedic with each of the engine companies. He said now was the time to increase the tax rate to get the service right from the start.

Richard Kenny echoed Mr. Motherway’s comments. He stated as the President of the Arrowcreek Homeowners Association, it was a pleasure to recognize Chief Greene’s service over the last five years. He said the Chief was everything that was expected of a trained fire professional and, as soon as he became the Chief, he reached out to the community and made himself accessible to discuss any problems and concerns. He stated the Chief not only listened but took action, and the residents along the Mt. Rose corridor would benefit from the new fire station for decades to come. He spoke about the Chief conducting first aid training, inspecting homes for defensible space, clearing brush as part of the fuels management programs, and conducting the annual emergency evacuation drill. He stated all of the programs were well organized and very active since the Chief took over the SFPD. He said the Chief would be sorely missed and everyone wished him and his wife well.

Mr. Kenny congratulated the Commissioners with moving forward with consolidation, and he encouraged them to continue talks with the Cities of Reno and Sparks, because it was painfully obvious a regional consolidation made the most sense for all concerned. He said he would prefer having the service rather than getting a tax break.

Katie Kenny stated she was an original member of the Arrowcreek Safety Committee formed in 2005. She said it took six years to get a new fire station constructed in the Mt. Rose corridor and Chief Greene was instrumental in the effort. She thanked the Chief for his many years of dedication and hard work to improve fire protection services for not only the SFPD’s residents, but for others outside the SFPD’s jurisdiction. She thanked the Chief and wished he and his wife all the best.

Ms. Kenny recognized the Board had to make difficult decisions and commended the Board in holding to its vision to provide an equitable and as reasonable a level of service as possible with the scarce resources available.

Shryl Bailey, West Washoe Valley Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) representative, wished Chief Greene well in his retirement. She noted the people in Washoe Valley currently had an eight minute response time, but having service reduced to a two person rescue unit would leave the Valley without fire suppression capabilities for 20 or more minutes. She said combining the two districts was a good idea, but paramedic services were needed at all of the stations serving the unincorporated areas of Washoe County, because those services were not required to be provided by the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA). She noted neither the TMFPD nor the SFPD were sustainable over the long term. She stated the new district should start with a clean slate, should provide equal service, and for the taxes to be equitable and fair for all citizens. She said every decision to relocate staff left another area understaffed and there was no way of knowing where the next call would come from. She discussed an example of the consequences of that happening. She stated building volunteer fire companies was a good idea, but they could not be expected to fill the shoes of the full-time fire fighters.

**CONSENT AGENDA – AGENDA ITEMS 3A AND 3B**

**11-139SF AGENDA ITEM 3A**

**Agenda Subject: “Approval of BOFC meeting minutes from the September 27, 2011 and October 11, 2011.”**

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Humke, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 3A be approved.

**11-140SF AGENDA ITEM 3B**

**Agenda Subject: “Approval of the Volunteer Report for August 2011.”**

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Humke, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 3B be approved.

**11-141SF AGENDA ITEM 4**

**Agenda Subject: “Chief’s Report including Arrowcreek Station update.”**

Michael Greene, Fire Chief, stated the construction of the Arrowcreek station was on schedule and the station could be finished prior to March 1, 2012.

Chief Greene commended the Commissioners on selecting the option that would bring the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) and the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection (TMFPD) together during Agenda Item 5 of the TMFPD meeting, which was Agenda Item 6 below. He believed that was an important step toward the future.

There was no action taken or public comment on this item.

**11-142SF      AGENDA ITEM 5**

**Agenda Subject: “Consideration of the acceptance of resignation of Sierra Fire Protection District Fire Chief Michael Greene; approval of the Separation Agreement between the District and Chief Greene, to include final compensation for accrued vacation time, sick time and severance pay in the estimated amount of \$60,847.51; authorization to the Comptrollers Office to make final payout adjustments and execute final payout, and appointment of Battalion Chief Timothy Leighton as Acting Fire Chief of the Sierra Fire Protection District, compensation consistent with Article 35 of the Sierra Fire Protection District Chief Officers Association agreement 10% working out of classification pay.”**

Michael Greene, Fire Chief, read his letter of resignation to the Board, which was delivered to Chairman Breternitz on October 10, 2011.

In response to the call for public comment, Donna Peterson said she was representing herself and the community and thanked Chief Greene for his commitment to the citizens of Washoe Valley. A copy of her comments was placed on file with the Clerk.

George Thomas said the community was fortunate to have had an individual leading the SFPD from its inception who was innovative, focused, had the vision to see the deficiencies in the District’s fire protection services, to define what was needed to improve services, and to work diligently to overcome the obstacles to implement the needed changes. He said Chief Greene was a unique public servant and he wished him well.

Sarah Thomas said Chief Greene was a talented public official and was the type of individual that helped communities thrive. She stated he set the County on the path to solving its most crucial problem of providing quality emergency services in tough economic times. She thanked the Chief for his willingness to work so hard for the community, and she would miss his ability to think outside the box.

Diane Rose said Chief Greene’s leaving was a great loss for everyone. She stated his leadership created successful evacuation plans, obtained stimulus money to build the Arrowcreek Station, and found a way to staff the Joy Lake Road Station. She discussed the impact of his programs and his personal connection to the people in the

community. She believed she spoke for many people who would miss the best Chief this County ever had, and she thanked Chief Greene for herself and everyone.

Bob Ackerman spoke of Chief Greene's accomplishments and thanked him on behalf of himself and his wife. A copy of his comments was placed on file with the Clerk.

Commissioner Weber thanked Chief Greene for his service to the County.

Chairman Breternitz echoed the citizens' comments in thanking the Chief and noted the Chief set in motion a lot of projects, which the Board would need to keep going.

Commissioner Jung thanked Chief Greene for his dedicated service to the SFPD and to the community as a whole. She said it was not a secret the County would not have received the money for the Arrowcreek Station without the Chief's work, and she commended him for that.

Katy Simon, County Manager, also thanked Chief Greene for his hard work. She noted Tim Leighton's compensation agreement as Acting Fire Chief would be brought to the Board on November 8, 2011, but she requested the Board move forward with his appointment.

Commissioner Humke said the totality of Chief Greene's work product was substantial. He stated he enjoyed his association with the Chief, and he hoped the Chief had a great retirement.

Commissioner Larkin extended his sincere appreciation to Chief Greene.

On motion by Commissioner Humke, seconded by Commissioner Weber, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be accepted, approved, authorized, executed, and appointed. It was further ordered that Timothy Leighton's compensation agreement be brought back to the Board on November 8, 2011.

#### **11-144SF     AGENDA ITEM 7**

**Agenda Subject: "Discussion and possible acceptance of a report on the plan for fiscal, operational, and service savings for Fiscal Year 2011-2012, including the cost/benefit of the collective bargaining agreements (CBA) with the Firefighters (IAFF Local 3895) and the Battalion Chiefs (SFPD Chief Officers Association) and the agreements' impact on daily operations and service delivery."**

Michael Greene, Fire Chief, stated there had been a deficit for Fiscal Year 2011-12 of \$107,000, which was addressed by a combination of savings and unexpected additional revenue as outlined in the staff report dated October 17, 2011. He reviewed his PowerPoint presentation regarding the impact of vacancies on the ability to staff the

stations with the current number of employees. He explained the cost-saving measures were put in place in August 2011, which allowed going to three-person staffing. He stated the issue was the November to July coverage and having to staff an additional station with two less employees, which was different from the staffing plan initially presented to the Board. A copy of his presentation was placed on file with the Clerk.

Chief Green said while he agreed with putting together the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) and the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD), the Joy Lake station needed another look because the new road could provide faster backup to the Washoe Valley. He felt the Joy Lake and the Arrowcreek Stations fit together like a glove in terms of response times versus having the Galena Station; and the Galena volunteers were also anxious to have their station back.

Chairman Breternitz noted he was impressed by the reduction in the SFPD's deficit over the last few months, which balanced the budget for all intents and purposes. He felt that was something the Chief should be proud of.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Humke, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 7 be accepted.

#### **11-145SF     AGENDA ITEM 8**

**Agenda Subject: "Recommendation to approve expenditures between Sierra Fire Protection District and Renne Sloan Holtzman Sakai LLP to provide labor relations' negotiations and consulting services for 2011-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreements [not to exceed \$110,000], and direct the Finance Department to make the appropriate adjustments."**

Michael Greene, Fire Chief, said a portion of the money came out of last year's budget and a portion from this year's budget. He said the estimated amount was revised from \$110,000 to \$100,000.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Humke, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 8 be approved and directed with the amount amended to not exceed \$100,000.

#### **11-146SF     AGENDA ITEM 9**

**Agenda Subject: "Possible closed session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with Sierra Fire Protection District Employee Organizations per NRS 288.220."**

There was no closed session with the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) Employee Organizations.

**11-147SF     AGENDA ITEM 10**

**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).”**

There were no Board member comments.

**11-148SF     AGENDA ITEM 11**

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

Cathy Brandhorst addressed the Board.

Cliff Low echoed the comments he heard earlier regarding the job Michael Greene, Fire Chief, had done. He stated the Chief had put “service” back into public service. He stated he also wanted to echo Shryl Bailey’s comments because he also lived in West Washoe Valley, and he asked the Board not to forget them in any actions they took. He said they paid the same taxes as others in the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD), but only received backup service from them. He noted there were also a number of homeowners who paid a higher level of taxes and they should get the service they paid for. He said Michael Hernandez, City of Reno Fire Chief, had forgotten earlier about the automatic aid agreement with the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD), which he felt had been the cause of a lot of problems and financial inequities.

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**1:15 p.m.** There being no further business to discuss, on motion by Commissioner Humke, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried, the meeting was adjourned.

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**JOHN BRETERNITZ**, Chairman  
Sierra Fire Protection District

**ATTEST:**

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

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