

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

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m.

MARCH 22, 2011

PRESENT:

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

**Amy Harvey, County Clerk**  
**John Berkich, Assistant County Manager**  
**Melanie Foster, Legal Counsel**  
**Michael Greene, Fire Chief**

The Board convened at 10:47 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:

**11-26SF      AGENDA ITEM 2A**

**Agenda Subject:** “Approval of Agenda for the March 22, 2011 SFPD Fire Commissioners Meeting.”

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 2A be approved.

**11-27SF      AGENDA ITEM 3**

**Agenda Subject:** “Approval of the 2011 Annual Operating Plan between the Sierra Fire Protection District and the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest Carson Ranger District and if approved, authorize Chairman to execute same.”

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Larkin, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 3 be approved, authorized and executed.

**11-28SF      AGENDA ITEM 4**

**Agenda Subject: “Acknowledge receipt of the Sierra Fire Protection District Audit Report from the Washoe County Internal Audit Division.”**

Alison Gordon, Internal Auditor, stated that the Internal Audit Division performed an audit of the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) at the request of the Board of Fire Commissioners. She said the audit assessed current practices and looked for opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in administrating the District’s fire protection programs.

Ms. Gordon indicated generally, staff found that District staff worked diligently to fulfill their mission of protecting life, property and the environment by safely providing the highest level of medical, fire and emergency services. The District also engaged the community in nationally recognized community evacuation drills, citizen CPR training, school programs, and a unique holiday sleigh that delivered safety messages and presents to area children. The results of the review indicated internal and management controls could be strengthened and program operations could be improved. Ms. Gordon noted the following operations could be improved:

- Controls could be improved in pay rate, and human resource practices;
- Payroll processing controls could be enhanced by ensuring adequate segregation of duties exists for timekeeping and payroll processing;
- Federal grant reporting requirements should be followed;
- The career and volunteer medical exam program could be improved;
- Purchasing practices could be enhanced;
- District and County procurement card policies and procedures should be adhered to;
- The District needed to consider using the volunteers in a more active role, such as implementing a volunteer supplemental staffing program; and,
- Pharmaceutical and medical supply practices could be enhanced.

SFPD Chief Michael Greene agreed with the audit’s findings and agreed to work with Ms. Gordon to create an implementation plan establishing responsibilities and timelines to enact the report’s findings. He expected to report on the progress of such a plan during the next Fire Board meeting. Chief Greene stated that new payroll programs would be evaluated, which would address the checks and balances as mentioned in the audit.

Commissioner Jung inquired if other fire agencies had been consulted regarding the payroll software being used in the industry. Chief Greene replied it would cost approximately \$350,000 to include the District within the County’s SAP program. Currently, the District used a hybrid of the ADP system, which was intended to be a temporary system. He explained with the new software the monthly cost would remain the same, but noted that other local fire agencies did not use that software. Chief Greene indicated it would cost \$5,000 to cross over to the system and then there would be a

monthly fee that equated to half of the current monthly fee. Ms. Gordon explained this was a web-based system and, computed over the current system would result in approximately \$2,200 saved annually in software costs, but that did not include staff time to process the payroll.

Commissioner Humke asked if not sending an unqualified volunteer to a fire scene was included in the modifications. Chief Greene replied that was included as a modification, but that had been remedied and implemented.

In response to a questions from Commissioner Larkin, Ms. Gordon clarified the new payroll system would not address the pay rate issue and, as part of resolving those pay rate issues, the report recommended the SFPD work with the Human Resources Department to incorporate an approval process before any rates were implemented. In terms of risk assessment, she said some of the issues were a higher risk than others. She said until there were some controls over pay rates and payroll systems that piece was also a high risk, as was the use of unqualified volunteers. Commissioner Larkin was concerned that some controls were not in place. Ms. Gordon explained policies and procedures were in place; however, those policies and procedures were not being followed. She emphasized those needed to be followed and the resources available be used to help establish a basis for controls.

Commissioner Larkin asked if the web-based payroll system would resolve some issues. Ms. Gordon replied the web-based system would add some additional controls, but prior to any pay rates being changed the District needed to go through the Human Resources Department before those were put into the system. She reiterated that the District needed to follow the policies and procedures that were in place.

In response to the call for public comment, Pete Cannizzaro, Washoe County Volunteer Firefighters Association Vice President, said he worked for some time with the respective Chiefs on the volunteer issues. He said it was not the volunteers intent to have a minimum wage program on the weekends. The intent was to develop a volunteer force that was well-trained and well-skilled in order to respond to emergencies, but not to displace career fire personnel.

On motion by Commissioner Larkin, seconded by Commissioner Humke, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 4 be accepted.

**11-29SF      AGENDA ITEM 5**

**Agenda Subject: “Discussion and approval of performance goals and objectives for Sierra Fire Protection District Fire Chief Michal Greene for the period between March 22, 2011 and February 8, 2012.”**

Fire Chief Michael Greene said he had reviewed the goals and objectives set by the Board and worked to translate that direction into his goals and objectives.

Commissioner Larkin stated the report indicated that a matrix would be included and asked if that matrix would be listed under management and fiscal resources. Chief Greene stated that was correct. Commissioner Larkin stated the findings from the Auditor were numerous and the report struck on the lack of leadership in the organization. He said the District was not an independent organization and needed to be run as an organization integrated with County government.

Chairman Breternitz requested a review from the Internal Auditor to verify that the items had been resolved from an operational standpoint.

Commissioner Humke said a section under the objective “to inform and engage the SFPD community in the fire district” emphasized “with all areas of the District,” and asked if that was the intent. Chief Greene replied that was correct. Commissioner Humke asked for any comments the Chief had toward the working relationship with labor negotiations. Chief Greene indicated there were two labor organizations associated with the District. He said there was a dedicated funding source for fire enabling them to look at the budget numbers and identify the effectiveness of each of the programs and implement recommendations allowing labor negotiations to be less adversarial. Commissioner Humke stated if there was a labor agreement item that was not sustainable over the long-term a board should read the contract, but believed it was incumbent upon the Chief to point out failings in negotiations.

**11:28 p.m.** Commissioner Larkin left the meeting during public comment.

In response to the call for public comment, Bob Ackerman commented on the audit. He said he saw the audit report as being positive, and a process to be improved on.

On motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Commissioner Weber, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Larkin absent, it was ordered that the performance goals and objectives for SFPD Chief Michael Greene for the period between March 22, 2011 and February of 2012 be approved.

**11-30SF      AGENDA ITEM 6**

**Agenda Subject: “Presentation on the history of the Washoe County Sierra Forest Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District.”**

Fire Chief Michael Greene requested this presentation be conducted during the April 12, 2011 meeting; however, he would place the written report on the District’s webpage.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Commissioner Humke, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Larkin absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 6 be continued to the April 12, 2011 meeting.

**11-31SF      AGENDA ITEM 8**

**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.

**11-32SF      AGENDA ITEM 9**

**Agenda Subject: “Public Comment.”**

There was no response to the call for public comment.

**11-33SF      AGENDA ITEM 7**

**Agenda Subject: “Possible closed session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with Employee Organizations per NRS 288.220.**

**11:36 a.m.** On motion by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Larkin absent, it was ordered that the meeting recess to a closed session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with Employee Organizations per NRS 288.220.

**5:30 p.m.** The Board reconvened and adjourned as the SFPD Board of Fire Commissioners.

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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:  
Stacy Gonzales, Deputy County Clerk*