

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

MONDAY

1:30 P.M.

JUNE 15, 2015

CONCURRENT MEETING

PRESENT:

Marsha Berkgigler, Chair
Kitty Jung, Vice Chair
Vaughn Hartung, Commissioner
Bob Lucey, Commissioner

Jaime Dellera, Deputy County Clerk
John Slaughter, County Manager
Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel

ABSENT:

Jeanne Herman, Commissioner

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 1:35 p.m. in special session with the Reno City Council and the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District in the Reno City Council Chamber, One East First Street, Reno, Nevada, with Chair Berkgigler presiding. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Deputy Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

15-0486 AGENDA ITEM 4 – Public Comment

On the call for public comment, William T. Steward stated he appreciated the City Council, County Commissioners and Fire Departments coming together to solve their differences and determine the best practices to serve the public. He hoped everyone could sift through information and details to do the right thing. He believed the discussions should center on the fire departments, but also include the Emergency Medical Services (EMS), police, Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) and University of Nevada Reno (UNR) as well to quantify a true public safety model.

Steven Perez stated he was a retired firefighter and had been actively involved in fire issues for the past six years. He discussed the history of the past fire agreement between the City of Reno and the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) stating the reason it did not work was the City refused to put fire tax monies into a dedicated fire fund. Instead, the funds were put in the General Fund and as a result, those monies were spent on things that were not fire related. He said the City chose to close or brownout stations and, at that time, the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) ended up responding to and taking care of the City's citizens by providing paramedics

with no compensation. He said firefighting was supposed to be about the people they were tasked to protect, without regard for jurisdiction. He said we should be able to come up with a simplistic plan that would work for everyone no matter where they lived.

Jeff Church explained a Reno Ballot Measure Initiative passed in 1996 for additional firefighters and when it went into effect in 1998, Reno had approximately 226 firefighters and now there were only 204. He thought paying \$4 million in taxes for additional firefighters that they were not going to get was wrong. He said those taxes were going into the General Fund when the Somersett and Skyline fire stations had been closed 98 percent to 100 percent of the time, which put the public in danger. He noted under the present union contract for 4-man crews if one called in sick then the other three would not be allowed to stay at that station; they would be transferred to another station. The Somersett fire station was empty except for the apparatus, which meant the equipment would not be taken care of and would rust. He said this affected automatic aid because no one was there to provide aid to Verdi or the County areas when it was needed. He said the Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) Report indicated efficiency and effectiveness were sacrificed for local control.

Jerry Gamroth stated fire personnel and their families should not have to worry about how to pay for injuries, long-term care or if their retirement contributions were current. He said if he was a Reno resident, he would be concerned that no money was appropriated to train and certify paramedics and to equip their apparatus with Advanced Life Support (ALS). He said he knew most of the Council and Commissioners were newly elected and did not create the current financial sins, but County residents should also not be responsible for them. He thought regionalization was just a "buzz" word to cover up progress with regard to consolidation and he felt that was not right. He said the lack of transparency upset a lot of people and the fact that Sparks, Pyramid Lake and North Lake Tahoe were not present at the meetings was not a way to move ahead with the regional concept. He said spending more money on staff for a merge or consolidation was a waste of money and he hoped the Commissioners would protect their County taxpayers with respect to automatic aid.

Robert Parker provided a brief background of the Interlocal Agreement, by stating that in 2000 the TMFPD hired the SFPD to operate the TMFPD. TMFPD provided the rolling stock, fire engines, trucks, water tenders and fire stations and paid Reno to operate and maintain them. The contracts provided that the County would get back the equipment and the stations in good shape upon expiration; however, that was not the case. He said all of the rolling stock required major repairs and three of the fire engines were inoperable. Engine 18 in Cold Springs and Engine 13 in Silver Lake had tire cords sticking out of the tires and were leaking motor oil and transmission fluid; those were pieces of equipment that Reno was being paid to maintain. He said Engine 14 in Damonte Ranch continuously overheated and Brush Engine 14 had both front tires cut; and both engines had dead batteries. The Brush Engine and Engine 16 in Washoe Valley were four quarts low on oil and none of the fire extinguishers in the stations or on the fire trucks had been serviced for three years. He concluded the equipment the TMFPD got back could not initially be used to respond to emergencies and all six of the fire stations

were filthy and had damage. He said it was important to remember that each one of those stations had a Reno supervisor (Captain) on site and it was impossible to believe they did not know that was going on. He wondered why the TMFPD would want anything to be managed by Reno after discovering how all the equipment and stations had been managed. Mr. Parker provided a handout, which was placed on file with the Clerk.

Jaime Deller, Washoe County Deputy Clerk, explained Commissioner Lucey received an email from Debbie Sheltra who requested that it be read into the record. The email was placed on file with the Clerk.

Tom Motherway urged the Council and the Commissioners to take advantage of the legislative order regarding automatic aid. He thought that set a foundation in the statute, which could be improved upon, but he hesitated to discuss regionalization, joint power agreements or interlocal agreements until a couple of conditions could be met. He thought there should be a fire tax in the City of Reno allocated specifically for fire and EMS like there was for the County, so there would be assured funding all the way through. He also believed there should be an independently elected Fire Board across the whole region and said there should be union agreements to provide for flexible staffing. He urged the Council and the Commissioners to go ahead with automatic aid, because he felt that was important; however, he wanted them to keep regionalization as a vision with respect to his conditions.

15-0487 **AGENDA ITEM 5** – Presentation, discussion and possible direction to staff regarding an outline of the process to develop and automatic aid agreement including major components of automatic aid, cost, geographic areas and a timeline for implementation.

There was no public comment on this item.

David Cochran, Reno Fire Department Interim Chief, stated the Commissioners and Council met on May 26th to discuss regionalization and at that time, staff was directed to move forward with automatic aid and regionalization. Since that time, Senate Bill (SB) 185 had been passed by the Legislature, which mandated that the closest fire vehicle would respond to any brush or structure fire and the affected entities were to negotiate to reach an automatic aid agreement. He said those negotiations had already begun and the only entity exempt from those negotiations was the Airport Authority. He explained he had worked with the Reno City Manager to view the deal points and had met with Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Chief Charles Moore and his staff to discuss the details.

Interim Chief Cochran went over his presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk, highlighting the automatic aid negotiation points. Those points included geographical limitations, analysis of career stations to determine where the closest vehicles were, resource availability, service levels, training, service commitments and reimbursement. He noted that the service levels would not be “like for like” as Reno staffed their vehicles with 4-man crews and the TMFPD staffed their equipment with 3-

man crews. He believed training was going to be an issue. He said they would have to identify areas of skill level, service delivery and where improvement needed to happen on both sides. He believed the training was an opportunity which could be learned jointly and effectively. He said service commitments were critical when a host agency would be obligated to send sufficient resources to relieve the agency providing aid. He said it was not clear if they needed a mechanism for reimbursement at this time, but it was one of the mandated negotiation points within SB 185. He said dispatch was not a deal point, but should be considered as a mechanism to be considered.

Interim Chief Cochran said the next step in the process was where to go from here and what would be the time period for implementation of the automatic aid agreement. The law goes into effect October 1, 2015; therefore, he said they intended to have several meetings in the weeks to come. He thought the next step would be to identify those deal points that everyone agreed upon and then look at the deal points that needed to be negotiated.

Paul McKenzie, Reno City Councilmember, asked if Reno or the County had reached out to Sparks since they were also involved in SB 185. Interim Chief Cochran responded they had not reached out to Sparks. Councilmember McKenzie stated he was aware Reno had an agreement with Sparks for one particular area and the County also had an aid agreement with Sparks, but he thought those would likely change under the provisions of SB 185 based upon which station was closest to respond.

Councilmember McKenzie stated the Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) Report contained a section which indicated staffing did not comply with national consensus standards NFPA 1710. He asked for an explanation of NFPA 1710. Interim Chief Cochran stated that was the standard for service delivery with four people per apparatus and he noted Reno complied with that standard.

Chair Berkbigler asked Interim Chief Cochran if he had a sense of how long it would take the Chiefs to come up with a consensus to bring back to the Council and the Commissioners. Interim Chief Cochran stated, in the interest of being consistent, he thought 60 to 90 days would be realistic.

Commissioner Jung questioned the resource availability issue and wondered if they had to prove that resources were not available or if that was something that could be fabricated. Interim Chief Cochran stated he did not think it could be fabricated because all of those resources were tracked. He said some apparatuses may be out of service due to mechanical reasons. Commissioner Jung asked if the City of Reno had an automatic aid agreement with the City of Sparks. Interim Chief Cochran stated they did. Commissioner Jung asked if Sparks had to reimburse Reno, because they only had 3-man crews. Interim Chief Cochran stated he would not characterize the agreement as like-for-like because it was more like an exchange of services, but it was an important point that needed to be addressed. Commissioner Jung stated she wanted the County to be treated as fairly as Sparks was being treated and she would like the Chiefs to pursue all kinds of options.

Commissioner Jung questioned the joint training that law enforcement did, which involved lots of different agencies. Interim Chief Cochran stated they did that for 12 years and on occasion they still had joint drills particularly with the regional teams like Hazmat. The training exercises stopped due to budget constraints and the inability to commit resources out of district. Commissioner Jung asked why the new recruits weren't trained together at one regionalized location. Interim Chief Cochran explained that the entities hired at different times. Commissioner Jung said she understood that, but other entities had one regional place and time for training. Interim Chief Cochran stated there were division academies but Reno had not hired anyone for eight years. Commissioner Jung asked if that could be worked toward in the future and Interim Chief Cochran said it could.

Commissioner Jung asked the Interim Chief to look at reimbursement to see if data was ever tracked during the consolidation agreement and how much money was exchanged for automatic aid. Interim Chief Cochran stated at that time they were essentially one department and there wasn't anything to track because there was no such thing as automatic aid. He said since all the apparatus was owned by one entity, there was just one dispatch and they sent whatever was available and closest. Commissioner Jung felt it was going to come to reimbursement and a cash exchange before they could look at anything such as regionalization, and she wanted that reimbursement policy to be agreed upon in a contract. She noted the deconsolidation exposed a lot of new expenses and was one of the main reasons why the deconsolidation occurred. She said the 4-man crew versus the 3-man crew was not the reason for the deconsolidation, but was a method for union-busting. She wanted to keep the transition clean and data-driven.

Chair Berkgibler asked legal counsel to remind the Commissioners that there was still litigation pending between the County and the City of Reno. Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel, stated the litigation referred to was the complaint the City of Reno filed against the TMEPD and there was still more action to be taken, which could include counter-claims about the City's performance under the contract. He stated talking about those things at this level among the members of the governing bodies could potentially be disruptive to the litigation. While he understood Commissioner Jung's interest in learning from past experiences and not wanting to repeat mistakes, he would urge the Commissioners to avoid discussions about performances and the issues from the contract until the litigation could be resolved.

Commissioner Jung discussed tracking data and asked about automatic aid to the Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD). She wondered if she could get a report on that data as well. Interim Chief Cochran stated he could get data from when they were consolidated in the past. Commissioner Jung stated she believed that information needed to be part of the decision making process as well.

Commissioner Hartung asked the Interim Chief if they might be better off to establish an escrow account and employ a third party to manage reimbursement requests. He questioned if that would satisfy Reno's side of the table. He understood the

City Council would have to decide but that way it would take the entities out of the loop. He noted there needed to be prearranged ground rules. Interim Chief Cochran stated if the entities decided to establish an escrow account, that would cause different negotiation points, such as how much money would be put into it, how it would be maintained, and who would draw out the funds. If they decided to do a grace period as he mentioned earlier and found they needed an escrow account, the discussions regarding who was in what area and how many times, might show it was close enough to call it a wash. He suggested they determine if there were any issues and work toward solutions like that. Commissioner Hartung said the only reason he suggested an escrow account was it sometimes put people at ease because a third party was managing the funds. After 60 days, or so, it could be determined to either keep funding those escrow accounts or dissolve them.

Commissioner Hartung stated there must have been some type of automatic aid agreement prior to the contractual arrangement with the City of Reno and wondered if that agreement could be reviewed to see what could be gained from the original language. Interim Chief Cochran stated he anticipated that would be done and would be one of the factors they would consider during negotiations. Commissioner Hartung asked about NFPA 1710 and if it was mandatory or a standard to have 4-man crews. Interim Chief Cochran replied it was a standard, but not mandatory. Commissioner Hartung wondered if the Interim Chief agreed that 4-man crews were always needed. Interim Chief Cochran responded he did believe that 4-man crews were needed, but thought 5-man crews were better than 4-man crews and so on. Commissioner Hartung stated Reno had 2-man rescue teams. Interim Chief Cochran confirmed those were for medical responses. He stated a 2-man crew rescue would never respond first to a fire because they carried no water. Commissioner Hartung stated his point was that rescue teams responded to medical incidents. He said Spanish Springs had an automatic aid agreement with the City of Sparks and it worked seamlessly every day. Interim Chief Cochran stated the SB 185 agreement that was being negotiated was specifically directed at fire responses and that was what they were working towards.

Andrew Clinger, City of Reno Manager, stated the automatic aid agreement with the City of Sparks was not really comparable because the City of Reno was part owner in the fire station with the City of Sparks. He felt that agreement was not one to model other agreements on because it was based on unique circumstances.

Jenny Brekhus, Reno City Councilwoman, stated there were comments made about lock-boxing as a part of the City of Reno's General Fund for fire operations. She said the tradition of funding fire services had urban components from the beginning. She said there were stories about the great fires in downtown Reno when the population in the unincorporated County was comparatively small. She stated as the population grew the unincorporated County did not stand up fire departments to the degree that Reno did. Cities and counties had certain bases, foundations and tax structures and when counties decided to get into the municipal land development patterns and services; they had to search for other resources. As the analysis was done to determine where Reno was required to serve automatic aid, she wondered how much focus would be given to

undeveloped land areas. She thought we were in a growing boom. She was mostly concerned about the development called Sierra Reflections, because the County decided to send the sewer treatment lines to 938 units. She asked Interim Chief Cochran if he had looked at that to see if that would be an automatic aid service area.

Interim Chief Cochran stated they had been headed in that direction before SB 185 passed, but the SB 185 mandate was to respond to all fires; structure and brush. So the buildout would enhance the exposure, but it would not change the automatic aid response because it was based on the closest engine to wherever a fire was in the service areas. Councilmember Brekhus asked if Reno was closest to the Sierra Reflections development. Interim Chief Cochran stated depending on how the roads were built, Station 12 might be closest. Councilmember Brekhus said so under SB 185, Reno could be closest before Damonte Ranch which she thought that would be leap-frog sprawl development. She said that was her biggest concern about SB 185.

Neoma Jardon, Reno City Councilmember, asked why the City of Sparks was not present at this meeting. She said the minutes from the last joint meeting indicated staff would seek feedback from the City of Sparks during the process with regard to their automatic aid agreement and financial statistics and that was to specifically provide a framework. She understood the demographics could be different but she thought a renewal of existing strengths and weaknesses in their existing automatic aid agreement might aid their efforts. Interim Chief Cochran said they sought and received a copy of their agreement. He said they were reviewing that agreement as part of the negotiations to see what worked and what was not working to model their agreement with TMFPD after. Based on his reading of the agreement, he was not involved in the negotiations so he did not want to say what their goal was but after looking at their agreement, it was not necessarily modeled on the mandate of SB 185. He said he thought their agreement also included the EMS response. Councilmember Jardon stated she could understand the factors in the automatic aid agreement may be quite different due to the law that was just passed, but she was specifically interested in looking at how one agency responded to the other and where the differences were. Interim Chief Cochran stated they had a reimbursement mechanism built in and it was his understanding that they had not utilized it in either direction. He said they had that mechanism along with a rate schedule, but they did not have call statistics. Councilmember Jardon stated that was what she was most interested in. She thought in anticipation of SB 185 passing, they had decided to invite everyone and if they chose to not participate that was their choice. What she thought she heard today was that Sparks had not been invited. Interim Chief Cochran stated he believed that discussion happened, but in terms of a motion and direction to staff he did not believe that happened.

Commissioner Lucey said the closest stations to the Sierra Reflections development were TMFPD stations. He said there were a number of TMFPD stations that would reach a call before Reno Station 12 would be called.

Charles Moore, TMFPD Fire Chief, stated he was tasked with discussing the major components of automatic aid, the costs, the geographic areas to be covered and

a timeline for implementation. He said there were automatic aid agreements in place prior to the contract for service Reno had with the TMFPD 12 years ago. He noted that until July 1, 2012 there was an automatic aid agreement with Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) and the City of Reno, particularly for the area of Boomtown, but those agreements were cancelled. He said that SB 185 set forth the ceiling for structure and brush fires and nothing more. Although, nothing in the bill prohibited the Council or the Board from considering going beyond that, they were required to respond with the closest unit to structure and brush fires. He asked their Geographical Information System Department (GISD) to conduct some assumptions and illustrate how to go about the process. He reviewed a map depicting a layout of the areas around Station 11 and Station 35. He said the TMFPD Station 35 would be the closest to areas in the City and Reno's Station 11 was closest to its jurisdiction. He showed areas where firetrucks leaving their respective stations at the same time would meet. He noted the colors on the map illustrated an eight-minute response area. He stated there might be some fire stations closer to a property; however, they might not get there faster because of the way the road was networked. It seemed logical to him to use time as the benchmark.

Chief Moore reviewed a slide depicting Stations 6 and 37 in Hidden Valley. Engine 37 would be able to service Reno and Engine 6 might be closer to portions of the TMFPD jurisdiction. He next reviewed the slide showing Stations 9 and 13. He said Station 13 was in Stead and Engine 9 was located by the Stead Airport. He said Engine 9 could also help them in the Lemmon Valley area and the TMFPD could help Reno in a substantial way in lower Stead and up and down the Highway 395 corridor. The methodology would be to look at each and every one of their stations to determine if the TMFPD could get to Reno faster or if Reno could get to the TMFPD jurisdiction faster. Once those areas were identified they would move on to the next process, which was called a Unit Resource Management (URM), formerly referred to as a Fire Response Zone. They would draw a line around the areas where the TMFPD would respond for Reno and where Reno would respond for the TMFPD and then build an address database for the dispatchers. He said when there was a structure fire reported and Reno was on one side and the TMFPD was on the other side, the dispatchers would "clone" the call.

Chief Moore stated SB 185 did not indicate there were areas of exclusion and the closest engine must respond regardless of what was negotiated and the process of dispatching would have to be built manually. He talked about the Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL) and getting dispatch to a point where that would become a simple process. He displayed a screen shot from his mobile data terminal (MDT) that allowed him and the dispatchers to see the position of every firetruck and every police vehicle even as they were moving. He showed an example of Engine 13 outside of its Station, Engine 9 in quarters, Engine 10 in quarters and Engine 15 out on a call. He said one of the problems with the manual system was what if the TMFPD's Engine 13 was out on a call and there happened to be a structure fire very near that station. The AVL would allow the dispatcher to send the closest fire engines to whatever emergency there was. He said in fact the jurisdictional boundaries would drop and the dispatcher only would need to see what the CAD software recommended and simply dispatch the proper resource. He

noted it would take about three to four weeks to build the GIS maps, another 3 weeks to build the URM and a couple weeks to test the system. He said it was not going to be difficult but it would be a little heavy for staff to get it all done and make sure it worked.

Chief Moore it seemed most costs were already embedded into the budget and the firefighters would be paid whether or not they were responding to a call or if they were in quarters. There could be some other costs with damage to equipment and he agreed with Interim Chief Cochran to see what the experience would be after a year. He said October 1st would come quickly and he would like to have the system set up and running and measure the costs component later.

Mayor Schieve asked what Chief Moore thought the AVL would cost. Chief Moore said we would not know if that software was already embedded within the Tiburon upgrade or if we would have to buy additional models. Mayor Schieve asked how long that software had been around. Chief Moore said Tiburon had been used by both agencies for a number of years and just within the last few months it had been upgraded. Mayor Schieve said from the research she did, most entities were using it and she could not imagine there was anyone on the Board that would disagree that the AVL would be extremely beneficial. Chief Moore concurred and said it would also allow the Board and Council the ability to add cardiac arrest and other types of calls. He said that was really the gold standard in serving the citizens. Mayor Schieve wondered if that had ever been proposed in the past. Chief Moore stated it was discussed at the Committee level when Tiburon was being discussed, but it was decided not to opt for that. He said 100 percent of the TMFPD Engines were equipped with GPS that were tied to their MDTs, which always sent a signal to dispatch. He said he left his MDT on all the time. Mayor Schieve said it seemed to be such a small thing to implement to save a lot of lives.

David Bobzien, City of Reno Councilmember, thanked Chief Moore for presenting the maps; however, he did not understand how the automatic aid agreement would progress in terms of how it was built out from those maps. He asked Chief Moore if he would build all the street addresses into dispatch so we would know who would roll where. He said SB 185 contained language to be specific in the agreement about geography and he wondered if the maps were for the areas needed for the automatic aid agreement or were there other areas to focus on. Chief Moore stated the maps he presented were only an example. Councilmember Bobzien said it was certainly helpful to have the maps laid out. He asked if the response time of eight minutes was in the middle of the night or 8:00 p.m. on a Friday evening. Chief Moore stated he picked eight minutes simply because they wanted to get to 90 percent of their calls within eight minutes. He said some of those areas, particularly in Lemmon Valley, Engine 9 might need 10 or 12 minutes because it was a little more rural. He said eight minutes was picked arbitrarily so they could get a time delta between the time at the station to the time of arrival. Councilmember Bobzien stated he was not trying to pick apart the eight-minute time itself, but wondered about traffic at different times of the day. Chief Moore responded they factored in speed limits, but did not factor in traffic or time of day.