

NORTH TAHOE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

NTPFD Station 51 Public Safety Center

222 Fairway Drive

Tahoe City, California

Tuesday

March 26, 2024 – 3:30 p.m.

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order** - *The meeting was called to order at 3:33 p.m. by President Baffone.*

Roll Call

Attending:

Board Present

Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, Loverde, and Ragan. A quorum was established.

Staff Present

Fire Chief Steve Leighton

Legal Counsel Steve Gross

Division Chief Alan Whisler

Division Chief Brent Armstrong

Director of Finance and Administration Kim Eason

Battalion Chief Jamie Sheppard

Engineer Kevin Gilley

Forest Fuels Manager April Shackelford

Administrative Assistant II/Clerk of the Board Melissa Daniels

IT Consultant Daryn Kratz

Public

Ed Miller – Meeks Bay Fire Protection District’s Board President

Louie Fielding – Meeks Bay Fire Protection District’s Board Director

2. **Additions to Agenda/Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented. There was no public comment.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

4. **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.

5. [Approval of Minutes from the regular Board meeting held February 27, 2024](#)

No change was requested from the Board. There was no comment from the public.

Upon motion by Director Ragan, seconded by Director Loverde, the Board approved the Minutes from the Regular Board meeting held February 27, 2024. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was four in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Loverde, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: Director Doyle
Absent: None*

6. [Correspondence](#) – There was none received since the last meeting.

7. [Board Officer Elections and Committee Assignments](#)

At the beginning of each year, the Board elects who will serve as officers and who will be assigned to certain District committees for the year.

There was a discussion of adding the Annexation Committee as an Ad Hoc Committee in case there is a need to have future meetings to discuss the annexation between both North Tahoe Fire and Meeks Bay Fire. If passed, this will allow the members of both Annexation Committees who were appointed to be compensated for these meetings.

Chief Leighton asked Legal Counsel Gross if we are required to have standing committees, especially if they have not been utilized for years. Legal Counsel Gross responded that we are not required to have any standing committees and if there is no purpose for the committee it can be dissolved under this agenda item.

Director Doyle added that she believes it would be best practice for the Finance & Budget Committee to meet before the board meeting where the fiscal year budget is presented to the Board.

There was a discussion between Board and staff. There was no public comment.

Upon motion by Director Doyle, seconded by Director Baffone, the following officers were elected: Director Baffone to serve as President, Director Doyle to serve as Vice President, and Director Ragan to serve as Treasurer. The Committees were agreed upon as follows with the addition of the Annexation Committee as an Ad Hoc Committee:

*Finance & Budget – Directors Ragan (Chair) and Doyle
Negotiations: Directors Ragan (Chair) and Doyle
Building/Construction: Directors Ragan (Chair) and Loverde
Rules & Regulations: Directors Doyle (Chair) and Baffone
Ad Hoc Personnel: Directors Loverde (Chair) and Ragan*

Ad Hoc Annexation Committee: Directors Baffone (Chair) and Doyle

A roll call vote was taken. The vote was five in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, Loverde, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None*

The public hearing opened at 3:50 p.m.

8. Public Hearing and Adoption of Proposed Ordinance No. 01-2024 Updating Director Compensation for Attendance at Meetings

Chief Leighton presented this item. The ordinance, if adopted, would increase the current Board compensation by 5% (from \$276.77 to \$290.61) per meeting for fiscal year 2024-2025. Any Director may elect to be compensated \$20.00 per day for each day's attendance at meetings of the Board, or for each day's service rendered as a member of the Board by request of the Board, and be provided health care coverage by the District on terms comparable to those offered full time administrative employees of the District based on health care enrollment eligibility.

If adopted, this change will go into effect July 1, 2024.

There was a discussion between Board and staff. There was no public comment.

The public hearing closed at 3:52 p.m.

Upon motion by Director Doyle, seconded by Director Ragan, the Board adopted Ordinance 01-2024. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was five in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, Loverde, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None*

9. Consider Voting for a Special District Representative and Alternate to Serve on the LAFCO Commission

Chief Leighton presented this item. The District received a request from Placer County LAFCO dated February 27, 2024 along with the attached ballot listing the nominees for a Special District Representative and Alternate seats on the Placer Local Agency Formation Commission. The statements of qualifications for the candidates were also included in the packet. Placer LAFCO requests the Board vote for one candidate per seat. The winning candidate shall assume the Regular or Alternate Special District seats no sooner than May 1, 2024. Placer LAFCO requests that ballots be returned to them no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 26, 2024. There was a discussion between Board and staff. There was no public comment.

Upon motion by Director Doyle, seconded by Director Baffone, the Board endorsed Luke Ragan for the LAFCO Special District Representative seat, and endorsed Luke Ragan as the primary choice for the LAFCO Special District Alternative seat and Judy Friedman for the secondary choice for the LAFCO Special District Alternate seat. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was five in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, Loverde, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None*

10. Consider Resolution 01-2024 for Equipment Purchase of a New Chipper Using Forest Futures Phase II Funding from the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation in the Amount of \$79,005.50 and to Trade in Existing Equipment for \$10,500

Chief Armstrong introduced this item then had Forest Fuels Manager April Shackelford presented this item to the Board. North Tahoe Fire Protection District owns a chipper that is no longer compliant with California Air Quality requirements. Funding has become available that will allow us to purchase new equipment to maintain compliance with air quality.

North Tahoe Fire Protection District (NTFPD) is currently engaged with the Defensible Space Workforce Development Project. This project is funded by the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation (TTCF) and their Forest Futures Phase II funding platform. This funding was designed to assist seasonal employees in gaining full-time employment by funding their time in the winter months to gain experience and build skills. Funding was set up for two people over two seasons. In 2022, we retained Julio Gonzalez over the winter and he has since been promoted to the full-time position of Inspector. In 2023, we did not have a seasonal employee to offer this funding. A time extension was requested but denied by the TTCF and we were asked if the money could be used for other worthy purposes. As our residential chipping program serves the community in their defensible space endeavors and a chipper purchase also fits the intent of these dollars, the TTCF agreed a chipper purchase would be an allowable use of their funding.

North Tahoe Fire Protection District reviewed the equipment purchasing policy and depreciation requirements of used equipment. Based on 2 CFR 200.313 and acquisition documentation, we must trade in the old equipment and replace it with new equipment. Using government pricing and Sourcewell documentation from Cal-Line we can trade in the old chipper for \$10,500. The new chipper costs \$79,005.50, thus expending \$68,505.50 from the grant funds which are already in our account.

April gave a brief explanation of the uses and benefits of the Chipper Day program/software to the Board.

There was a discussion between Board and staff. There was no public comment.

Upon motion by Director Ragan, seconded by Director Loverde, the Board adopted Resolution 01-2024 authorizing the Fire Chief, or his designee, to complete the chipper purchase using Forest Futures Phase II funding in the amount of \$79,005.50 from the TTCF while trading-in equipment that is out of compliance for \$10,500. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was five in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, Loverde, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None*

11. Consider Resolution 02-2024 to Support Applying for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Wildfire Prevention Grant Program for the North Tahoe Fire Hazardous Fuels Reduction Equipment Project (WP-NEU-58958301) in the Amount of \$601,800

Forest Fuels Manager April Shackelford presented this item to the Board. North Tahoe Fire is applying for the North Tahoe Fire Hazardous Fuels Reduction Equipment Project (23-WP-NEU-58958301) from the California Climate Investments Wildfire Prevention Grants Program and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal-Fire) in the amount of \$601,800. The proposal is summarized as follows:

The project has three primary goals, maintain the community curbside chipping program, enhance community workdays, and improve the fire district's ability to directly conduct fuels management projects. To support these goals, our objectives are comprised of the following: Purchase a new truck and chipper to replace aging equipment and maintain compliance with air quality; improve our ability to move combustible materials to chipping locations, green waste dumpsters, or to an air curtain burner; and to directly conduct fuels reduction treatments using a skid steer driven masticator for shrubs and small trees, and a winch to haul heavier materials to the road side for further processing. We expect to see continued and improved homeowner engagement with the chipping program, an improved ability to manage combustible materials produced at community workdays leading to more and more effective community workdays, and to see increases in acres treated through the deployment of district owned fuels reduction equipment.

The equipment being requested would maintain and enhance these endeavors and provide options to reduce fuels using methods that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while promoting community resiliency and cohesion.

There was a discussion regarding the air curtain burner and the benefits it provides regarding fuels reduction and biochar. Legal Counsel Gross addressed the Board and staff stating there is a study that is being finalized right now prepared by Truckee Fire, the Town of Truckee, Truckee Donner Public Utility District, and the Tahoe Truckee Airport District that is looking at options and cost effectiveness of different options to burn some of the hazard, either through a biomass facility or by air curtain burners that was just presented to Truckee Fire last Tuesday as a draft final form and will also be presented to the town in a week or so. Gross said that he would provide the draft to whoever is interested.

There was a discussion between Board and staff. There was no public comment.

Upon motion by Director Doyle, seconded by Director Ragan, the Board adopted Resolution 02-2024 authorizing the Fire Chief, or his designee, to apply for and enter into an agreement with Cal-Fire Wildfire Prevention Program to carry out the North Tahoe Fire Hazardous Fuels Reduction Equipment Grant Project (23-WP-NEU-58958301) in the amount of \$601,800. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was five in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, Loverde, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None*

12. Consider Letter from General Counsel Steve Gross Requesting Porter Simon Rate Increase

General Counsel Steve Groos recused himself at 4:24 p.m. for this discussion. Chief Leighton presented this item to the Board. Rates for General Counsel services for North Tahoe Fire Protection District have not been adjusted since January 2004. General Counsel Steve Gross from Porter Simon has requested an increase in his hourly billing rate for General Counsel services from the current rate of \$250/hr to \$280/hr, an increase in the monthly fixed fee from \$1,000/month to \$1,120/month and a new rate of \$365/hr for litigation services, should they ever be needed. He has also requested that the new rates become effective as of April 1, 2024.

There was a discussion between Board and staff. There was no public comment.

Upon motion by Director Loverde, seconded by Director Correa, the Board approved to increase the hourly billings rate for General Counsel services to \$280/hr, increase the monthly fixed fee to \$1,120/month, and a new rate of \$365/hr for litigation services to be effective April 1, 2024. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was five in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, Loverde, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None*

General Counsel Gross returned to the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

13. Update on Cyber Security Used in the Department

Chief Sheppard and Daryn Kratz provided an update to the Board on the cyber security measures we use for the department. Some highlights from the presentation include:

- Most of the data in the District has been transferred to different secure servers and diversified based on the data saved.

- The District utilizes One Drive and SharePoint.
- Assess to certain data is divided between Admin and Company drives. Only certain staff have access to files based on the individual's specific needs for specific programs based on job descriptions.
- Making sure that all employees are maintaining strong passwords and being vigilant of suspicious emails. If staff are unsure if an email is safe or not, they should contact Daryn or Chief Sheppard.

Chief Sheppard summarized that the goal for IT is to balance security and accessibility, give the employees who need access to certain data access, not giving the employees who do not need access to certain data access, and having staff not put themselves out there with massive amounts of data on hard drives that can be taken and downloaded elsewhere.

Director Doyle thanked Chief Sheppard and Daryn for the presentation. She suggested that District discuss implementing a cyber security risk management plan.

This item was for informational purposes. There was a discussion between Board and staff. No Board action was required. President Baffone asked for public comment and there was a public comment by Louis Fielding who commented that he liked the idea of having a cyber security risk management plan. Ed Miller commented that he wanted to thank Daryn for the work that he does for the District.

14. [Future planning with Meeks Bay Fire](#)

Chief Leighton updated the Board on this item. We are working our way through the process and are further than we have ever been in the past several years. We are to the point where there needs to be a decision from the North Tahoe Fire Board to keep moving forward in the process. At the last Meeks Bay Fire Protection District's Board meeting, the Directors voted unanimously approving all three motions that staff is asking the North Tahoe Fire Board to vote on today. The only change to the motions was on motion #1 which they voted to keep the Board makeup as it is stated in the resolution. At today's meeting, staff is asking the Board to vote on three motions. The first motion is to reaffirm Resolution 30-2022 regarding the dissolution of the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District and the annexation of the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District to the North Tahoe Fire Protection District. The second motion is to accept the four terms proposed in the offer from El Dorado County. The third motion is to approve the tentative established timeline to complete the annexation that staff provided with help from El Dorado County's CAO Sue Hennie and Placer County LAFCO's Executive Officer Michelle McIntyre.

After the Board votes tonight, staff will send a letter tomorrow morning to Placer County LAFCO, Goodwin Consulting who is doing Placer County's fiscal impact analysis, Placer County Board of Supervisors, and El Dorado County Board of Supervisors. The letter is going to request that these motions be included in a resolution and added to the May 2024 agendas for both El Dorado and Placer County Board of Supervisors Board meetings. From there, those approved resolutions from both counties will be sent to Placer County LAFCO for a public hearing on July 10th and a protest hearing to be held on either August 19th or August 20th. On

September 11th, Placer County LAFCO will adopt a resolution at the Commission meeting to record a certificate of completion of the annexation for an effective date of 10/1/2024.

There was a discussion between the Board and staff. President Baffone asked for public comment and there was a public comment by Ed Miller who commented that the Meeks Bay Fire Board of Directors strongly encourages the North Tahoe Fire Board's participation and ratification of the decision that was made on this same topic a year ago so both Boards can move forward. Louie Fielding commented that we have a good offer from El Dorado County, and he hopes that the North Tahoe Fire Directors support this.

Upon motion by Director Baffone, seconded by Director Ragan, the Board reaffirmed Resolution 30-2022 regarding the dissolution of the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District and the annexation of the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District to the North Tahoe Fire Protection District. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was four in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: Director Loverde
Absent: None*

Upon motion by Director Baffone, seconded by Director Doyle, the Board accepted the four terms as stated in the staff report. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was four in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: Director Loverde
Absent: None*

Upon motion by Director Doyle, seconded by Director Baffone, the Board approved the tentative established timeline to complete annexation as stated in the staff report. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was four in favor:

*Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: Director Loverde
Absent: None*

15. [Finance Report](#)

- 15.1 [Purchases Journal](#)
- 15.2 [Breakdown of CalCard purchases](#)
- 15.3 [Gross payroll totals](#)
- 15.4 [Account Detail Report](#)

There was a discussion between the Board and staff. There was a public no comment.

Upon motion by Director Ragan, seconded by Director Loverde the Board approved the finance report dated March 26, 2024 and the supporting Items 15.1-15.4, as presented. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was five in favor:

Ayes: Directors Baffone, Correa, Doyle, Loverde, and Ragan
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

16. Staff Reports

- 16.1 [Fire Chief](#)
- 16.2 [Division Chief – Operations / Training](#)
- 16.3 [Division Chief – Fire Marshal / Forest Fuels / PIO / Facilities](#)
- 16.4 [A Shift Battalion Chief - Emergency Medical Services](#)
- 16.5 [B Shift Battalion Chief - Safety](#)
- 16.6 [C Shift Battalion Chief - Logistics](#)

Staff reports were reviewed and no action was taken.

There was a discussion between Board and staff. There was no public comment.

17. [Next Board Meeting and Other Important Dates](#)

- *April 30, 2024 – special Board meeting*
- *May 28, 2024 – regular Board meeting*
- *June 25, 2024 – regular Board meeting*

There was no Board or public comment.

18. Board Comments/Information Items

There were no Board comments or information items.

19. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned by President Baffone at 6:04 p.m.