CONCURRENT MEETING
RENO CITY COUNCIL, SPARKS CITY COUNCIL, WASHOE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS, SIERRA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS AND NORTH LAKE TAHOE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BRIEF OF MINUTES
September 21, 2015

The Reno City Council, Sparks City Council, Washoe County Board of Commissioners, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Board of Fire Commissioners, Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD) Board of Fire Commissioners and North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District (NLTFPD) held a concurrent meeting at 8:45 a.m. on Monday, September 21, 2015, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers at 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

PRESENT: Council Members Brekhus, Duerr, Delgado (via remote), McKenzie, Jardon and Bobzien and Mayor Schieve.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: City Attorney Hall and City Clerk Turney.

WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSIONER MARSHA BERKBIGLER PRESIDED.

4. Public Comment

Joseph Benedict, no address provided, discussed carcinogens and chemicals in the drinking water.

Ross Tisevich, no address provided, placed and then removed what he called a gas mask from his face, and discussed the use of pesticides in parks and along the Truckee River. Mr. Tisevich then pulled a plastic Roundup bottle out from under his sweatshirt and drank from it. He was restrained and escorted from Chambers by police officers and firefighters.

A RECESS WAS CALLED AT 8:53 A.M. AND UPON RECONVENING AT 12:09 P.M. COUNCIL MEMBER DELGADO WAS ABSENT.
5. Approval of the Agenda – September 21, 2015.

   It was moved by Council Member Jardon, seconded by Council Member Bobzien to approve the agenda.

   Motion carried.

6. Update on Automatic Aid Agreements with Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, Sierra Fire Protection District, City of Sparks Fire Department and North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District in regards to SB185 compliance.

   Charles Moore, TMFPD/SFPD Fire Chief, presented an overview of the Staff Report. He said that it was determined through extensive GIS (Geographic Information Systems) analysis that the closest firefighting vehicle proximate to the incident location did not in every case produce the fastest response time. It was the conclusion of the study that dispatching the closest firefighting vehicle, as defined by fastest response time, should be the benchmark for the design of the automatic aid protocol, and would best serve to meet the intent of the legislation.

   Tom Garrison, Sparks Fire Chief, said that they have been in an automatic aid agreement with TMFPD for just over three years, and have shared over 1,000 calls on a 50/50 basis. The agreement works well for Washoe County and Sparks, and there was only one small area where we thought an adjustment needed to be made (the University Farms area). We already agreed that the City of Sparks will provide automatic aid to that area. We encourage you to accept this presentation and believe in terms of our relationship and the areas where we would be providing automatic aid to Washoe County, they are in full compliance with Senate Bill (SB) 185.

   Mike Brown, NLTFPD Fire Chief, discussed their compliance with TMFPD and other agencies.

   Council Member Brekhus asked if development potential within each of the map boundary areas was examined during the process.

   Chief Moore replied that they only examined existing conditions because this is going to change when the Southeast Connector is built. When and if we move any fire stations there will be conditions that change the automatic aid areas, so we went with what we know today. The agreement calls for adjustments every year as conditions change.

   It was moved by Council Member Duerr, seconded by Council Member Bobzien to accept the report.

   Motion carried with Council Member Delgado absent.
AGENDA
ITEM
NO.

7. Presentation, discussion and possible approval of an Automatic Aid Agreement between Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and the City of Reno Fire Department.

Charles Moore, TMFPD/SFPD Fire Chief, discussed the methodology used to determine the areas of coverage.

County Commissioner Vaughn Hartung and Chief Moore discussed tandem response issues.

Council Member Duerr referred to the map detailing the South Virginia Street/Wedge Parkway area, and requested clarification regarding fastest response times.

Chief Moore said that it may seem intuitive that the fire station closest to the geographic proximity of a fire would be the fastest to reach the scene, but it was determined during tests of that assumption that it is not always true. In some cases the closest fire station, as the crow flies, does not produce the fastest response time, which is why the three fire chiefs decided to use travel time as the criteria.

Commissioner Bob Lucey and Chief Moore discussed the Legislative Counsel Bureau’s directive that the agency closest to the fire is the one that should respond to a call. Chief Moore said that the Fire Chiefs used travel time to produce the fastest time, and Commissioner Lucey noted that the maps were based upon the vehicle being located in the engine house. Chief Moore said that some assumptions had to be made, and the assumption made was that all fire trucks were parked in quarters.

Commissioner Lucey said that firefighters are out of the station as much as they are in the station. The law, he said, reads that the emergency firefighting vehicle located closest to the structure or brush fire is required to respond. Chief Moore discussed the Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) system, and said that not everyone is ready to use it.

Commissioner Lucey discussed the importance of having every station respond to every incident, and of evaluating the agreement every year.

Council Member Bobzien said that GIS data is a good but limited tool, and the response data can be trued up when everyone gets AVL. He suggested that the LCB be asked to clarify the ‘closest entity’ provision of the legislation.

Council Member Jardon said that AVL is a critical component of automatic aid. While I would value the LCB opinion, I would caution that we should not wait until we receive it.
7. Presentation, discussion and possible approval of an Automatic Aid Agreement – continued

Council Member McKenzie suggested putting a timeline on the acquisition and launch of AVL, and discussed concerns about the ability of the entities to avoid duplicating services as more fire stations are built to support growth in the region.

Council Member Brekhus stated her concern that this is not necessarily a step toward more efficient governance for the region. We need a lot more analysis regarding how this will be administered, and I am an advocate of combining the City of Reno and Washoe County into one merged government entity to increase efficiency. This legislative approach is rather simplistic, and we are finding out it is a very difficulty administrative task we are moving forward with.

Council Member Brekhus and Interim Reno Fire Chief Dave Cochran discussed annual fire hydrant testing and other operational duties in the area north of Swan Lake. Chief Cochran stated that each jurisdiction will retain responsibility for its own administrative duties. This agreement, he said, only covers brush and structure fires. Ms. Brekhus and Chief Cochran also discussed joint training plans.

Paul Lipparelli, Assistant District Attorney, said that the LCB and its lawyers do not usually advise local governments about laws. A legislator could ask them to provide advice, but not local governments. The local governments’ attorneys should be able to provide you with their interpretation(s) of the law.

Commissioner Berkbigler agreed with Mr. Lipparelli’s assessment regarding the role of the LCB in explaining the law.

Commissioner Hartung asked if TMFPD/SFPD engines are currently equipped with AVL, and Chief Moore replied that they are. Commissioner Hartung asked if the City of Sparks’ engines are equipped with AVL, and Chief Garrison responded that Sparks’ engines currently have the capability to utilize AVL, but their dispatch patch system does not have the capability.

Commissioner Hartung noted that the Automatic Aid Agreement is for fire response only and does not include EMS (Emergency Medical Services). We should talk about EMS, he said, not just fire.

Commissioner Hartung and Chief Moore discussed cross-training, and Chief Moore said that all firefighters train and certify to the same standards.

Commissioner Lucey said that the maps as currently drawn provide a good first step for moving forward with the agreement.
7. Presentation, discussion and possible approval of an Automatic Aid Agreement – continued

Council Member Duerr, Chief Moore and Chief Cochran discussed reimbursement issues detailed in the Cooperative Agreement and Annual Operating Plan.

Council Member Jardon and Chief Cochran discussed incident command issues, including the release of equipment that is not needed at the scene of a fire.

Discussion ensued regarding the similarity of the two mutual aid agreements, rate structures, and differences between the maps.

Commissioner Berkbigler called for public comment.

Robert Parker submitted a Public Comment Form, but was not present in Chambers when called upon to speak.

Bob Ackerman, 25 Golden Current Circle, Galena Forest, stated his support for the TMFPD proposal.

Tom Dunn, Vice President of the Reno Firefighters Association, discussed the Las Vegas model of automatic aid.

It was moved by Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Commissioner Lucey to direct their Fire Chief to work with the City of Reno’s Fire Chief to share data amongst themselves to determine that the maps are fair and workable and bring it back to the Commission, and to approve the Cooperative Agreement between the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District and the City of Reno.

Motion carried.

Council Member Bobzien stated that this is a valuable step forward. I appreciate the approach to the final map piece, and am concerned about meeting the October 1, 2015 deadline. While the GIS tool is imperfect, it provides us with a starting point from which we can move forward and gain real world experience, and access to AVL will help us further develop the operational details.
7. Presentation, discussion and possible approval of an Automatic Aid Agreement – continued

It was moved by Council Member Bobzien, seconded by Council Member McKenzie to approve the Cooperative Agreement for automatic and mutual aid between the City of Reno and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District with regard to SB185 compliance, and direct the Fire Chiefs to determine the last remaining details with respect to the maps of the automatic aid areas.

Council Member Brekhus questioned the intent of the motion regarding the maps, and Council Member Bobzien clarified that the intent of the motion is to leave it to the Fire Chiefs to work out the final details on the maps.

Council Member Brekhus discussed her concerns about having the City of Reno provide service to areas of unincorporated Washoe County while Reno fire stations are still browned out. She said that leaving municipal boundaries to respond to fires in outlying areas is not a way forward, and discussed her concern about using Reno taxpayers’ dollars to respond to fires in areas of the County where property taxes are lower.

Council Member Duerr suggested that the Council Members and Commissioners refine the final maps today.

Council Member Bobzien stated that there was a thorough discussion about the differences in the maps, and he has confidence in staffs’ ability to iron out this last detail. I stand by the motion I made.

Motion carried with Council Member Delgado absent.

Commissioner Berkbigler and Mr. Lipparelli questioned the intent of the County’s motion with respect to bringing back the maps for final consideration.

Commissioner Hartung said that the intent of his motion was to approve the Cooperative Agreement between Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District and the City of Reno for automatic and mutual aid, and to have the Fire Chiefs work together. If the City of Reno feels that the smaller map is workable, I am okay with that. If they feel the larger map is workable, I am okay with that also. They do not feel they need our help in certain areas, and I’m not going to force it on them. Just let them work out the issue.

Commissioner Lucey said that the Commissioners are accepting Reno’s map as presented, and discussion will continue as the process moves forward.
Presentation, discussion and possible approval of an Automatic Aid Agreement – continued

Mr. Lipparelli said he thought Council Member Bobzien’s motion was to use the GIS map and direct the Fire Chiefs to work together to refine it.

Council Member Bobzien expressed his confidence in the Fire Chiefs and their staffs’ ability to examine the issue and come to an agreement regarding the maps.

Commissioner Hartung said that these kinds of documents will be constantly reevaluated, and it is up to the Fire Chiefs to decide those kinds of things along the way.

Mr. Lipparelli said the exhibit attached to the agreement that was submitted by the Truckee Meadows Fire Chief to the TMFPD Board shows the larger boundaries, not the crosshatched area that Council Member Duerr was pointing out. The County’s map is the larger map, and I want to make sure that the intent of the Fire Commissioners is clear from their vote because looking at it from the paper record I would assume that you adopted the larger map. If you are not adopting that, if you are adopting Reno’s version of the map, let us make sure we have a motion that says that.

Commissioner Berkbigler said the record shows that they have some concerns about whether we will be in compliance, but agree that the fire departments are clear and know what they are doing. We are adopting, she said, the smaller (Reno) map.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREKHUS ABSENT AT 1:27 P.M.

The Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt the smaller (Reno) map.

It was moved by Council Member Bobzien, seconded by Council Member McKenzie to reconsider the motion.

Motion carried with Council Members Brekhus and Delgado absent.

It was moved by Council Member Bobzien, seconded by Council Member Duerr to amend the motion and: 1) approve the Cooperative Agreement for automatic and mutual aid between the City of Reno and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District/Sierra Fire Protection District with regard to SB185 compliance; 2) direct the Fire Chiefs to determine the last remaining details with respect to the maps of the automatic aid areas; and 3) adopt the maps suggested by the City of Reno.

Motion carried with Council Members Brekhus and Delgado absent.
AGENDA
ITEM NO.
8. Possible direction by each governing board to its respective staff to discuss items relating to future fire services.

Steve Driscoll, Sparks City Manager, explained that each of the three jurisdictions (four jurisdictions including the Fire Board) have different rules regarding providing direction to staff. The three managers are requesting approval of the four Boards for the managers to get together with staff to clarify and define the services to be provided under fire service. Fire service is more than suppression; it is the whole gamut from dispatch to special teams. Once we define the services to be provided (most of that work has already been done), we can define service levels. Then we can discuss governance of those service levels. The managers will then come back to the elected boards for a policy decision before going to the next step in the process. We are asking that you authorize staff to use resources and commit the time to conduct the research and report back.

It was moved by Sparks Council Member Ron Schmitt, seconded by Sparks Council Member Ron Smith to authorize the Sparks City Manager to enter into the discussions outlined by Mr. Driscoll.

Motion carried with Sparks Council Member Bob Lawson absent.

It was moved by Council Member Jardon, seconded by Council Member McKenzie to authorize the City Manager to enter into the discussions outlined by Mr. Driscoll.

Motion carried with Council Members Brekhus and Delgado absent.

Commissioner Kitty Jung requested that staff provide details regarding what property taxes Reno, Sparks and Washoe County residents pay. She also requested that staff ensure that all of the entities’ policies and procedures are the same, and provide a report regarding when firefighters can start training together in the same Academy.

It was moved by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Commissioner Hartung to authorize the Washoe County Manager to enter into the discussion outlined by Mr. Driscoll.

Motion carried.

Mr. Driscoll stated that training is a major component of fire services, and staff is already addressing that issue.
Public Comment.

Jeff Church, Reno resident, submitted a Public Comment Form, but was not present in Chambers when called upon to speak.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 1:41 P.M.