

**NORTH LAKE TAHOE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

July 20, 2022

LOCATION: 863 Tanager, Incline Village, Nevada.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Chair Herron called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

***Roll Call of the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District Board of Directors:** Upon roll call, the following Board Members were present: Susan Herron, Chairman; Denise Bremer, Secretary-Treasurer; Greg McKay, Director; James Costalupes, Director. Art Cross, Vice-Chairman, absent.

***Guests present:** Fire Chief Ryan Sommers, NLTFPD; Assistant Fire Chief Russell Barnum, NLTFPD; Business Manager Sharon Cary, NLTFPD; Board Secretary/Administrative Assistant Andreina Quiroz, NLTFPD; Legal Counsel, Emily Meibert; Division Chief Isaac Powning, NLTFPD; FF/PM Jill Andersen, NLTFPD; Dale Spieker, Local 2139 Union President; Charles Miller, Resident/Board of Directors electee.

Approval of Agenda: Approved as submitted.

***NRS 241.020 RE: Public Comment. This is a Time for the Public to Comment on any Matter, Whether or Not it is Included on the Agenda of this Meeting.**

No public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Board Secretary Andreina Quiroz advised there was a change made to the June 2022 Accounts Payable report. The new report had a line item added on the last page showing a wire transfer that was made to the Union. Secretary Quiroz provided the Board with updated copies of the June 2022 Accounts Payable report and advised the updated report would replace pages 22 thru 24 of the Board of Directors (BOD) packet.

Chair Herron thanked her for the update.

Consent agenda approved as amended.

1 Approval of Minutes of the May 19, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting.

2

3 Review of Accounts Payable for May 2022.

4

5 Review of Accounts Payable for June 2022.

6

7 Approval of the May 2022 Monthly Management Report.

8

9 Approval of the June 2022 Monthly Management Report.

10

11 **NEW BUSINESS**

12

- 13 1. Discussion of and Possible Action to review and adjust Ambulance
- 14 billing Rates as presented by Firefighter/Paramedic Jill Andersen.

15

16 Assistant Fire Chief (AFC) Barnum began by stating that earlier this

17 year Chief Sommers directed him to review the ambulance billing

18 based upon the averages in the area as this was something that

19 had not been addressed since 2012. AFC Barnum explained that

20 during this process and based upon a number of factors, a strategy

21 had been developed so that going forward these adjustments will

22 not have to be looked at and addressed every five, seven or ten

23 years but rather, as it will automatically adjust every year.

24

25 AFC Barnum stated that Firefighter/Paramedic (FF/PM) Jill Andersen

26 took part in the original group that went over ambulance billing in

27 2012 and she took part in this review as well. AFC Barnum advised

28 the Board that he and FF/PM Andersen are both available to answer

29 any questions the Board may have on their submitted proposal.

30

31 Chair Herron opened the session to any questions the Board may

32 have.

33

34 Director McKay stated he would like to hear more about the

35 proposal made to the Board.

36

37 FF/PM Andersen began by stating she is in hopes the prepared

38 report reflects all the information that was gathered and said that in

39 going back and talking about the history of the project and seeing

40 where the district was ten years ago, were part of the methods that

41 helped them come up with some the suggestions that are being

42 made this year in comparisons to other districts.

43

44

1 FF/PM Andersen explained that North Tahoe Fire Protection District
2 (NLTFPD) seems like a logical example, but because they are in
3 California, they are not the most practical example because they
4 have a lot of taxes and other things, they are subject to. FF/PM
5 Andersen said Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority
6 (REMSA) is the other provider in Washoe County that we were
7 trying to keep our rates in line with and not charging more than
8 they do and advised their data is in the report.

9
10 FF/PM Andersen explained to the Board that as they can see on the
11 report, different prices for services and reporting years such as
12 2019/2017 were used for different departments due to the fact that
13 when FF/PM Andersen was calling and discussing this matter with
14 the different departments, many of them recognized that they too
15 had not done this update in a couple of years, hence why the
16 information provided was dated with previous years and fees are all
17 over the place. FF/PM Andersen added that the departments she
18 gathered data from expressed their curiosity in the outcome of our
19 process.

20
21 FF/PM Andersen said the report contains information about the
22 different payor groups adding that as one can see, most of our
23 payors come from commercial insurance which is where we end up
24 collecting the most money as Medicare only reimburses a certain
25 amount. FF/PM Andersen explained that they based the amount
26 that we will be charging off the Medicare reimbursement amount as
27 per the district third party billing company, Sharp Ambulance Billing
28 (Sharp) suggested because we do not want to charge an exorbitant
29 amount adding that although we can charge whatever we would
30 like, ultimately, we do not want to hurt the commercial payors.

31
32 FF/PM Andersen stated the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding
33 System (HCPCS) that is created by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid
34 Services (CMS) was reviewed and the report includes Regional Cost
35 Estimates for providing healthcare in different regions like a
36 Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment more or less and added
37 that that amount is updated every year. FF/PM Andersen added
38 that Sharp suggested three to five times that amount would be a
39 good place to start when looking at fee adjustment.

40
41 FF/PM Andersen stated that the last graph in the packet shows the
42 breakdown of what those fees would be, by multiplying them from
43 one though six times the allowed HCPCS amount and said that the
44 number that was most appropriate to her that does not exceed

1 REMSA's charges was multiplying by three the allowed HCPCS
2 allowed amount.

3
4 AFC Barnum added that this method that FF/PM Andersen came up
5 with was really an innovative way to track the charges and
6 adjustments in Medicaid as there are a lot of different ways to track
7 such as CPI, a Medical CPI, and a lot of different definitions of how
8 this can be adjusted. AFC Barnum explained that this way uses the
9 actual number that Medicare reimburses, and we just use a
10 multiplier of that number. AFC Barnum added that Medicare adjusts
11 that number on a yearly basis, and that with our current
12 reimbursement rate, we receive an average of \$633 per bill when
13 averaging the payors and the non-payers. AFC Barnum deferred to
14 FF/PM Andersen on our reimbursement overall percentage.

15
16 FF/PM Andersen stated that over a calendar year the district ran
17 1100 calls and about 62% of those calls pay something towards
18 their transport fees and of those payments, we receive about \$900
19 from any patient that pays something but there is still the
20 remaining 38% where often we do not get any payment from.
21 FF/PM Andersen stated that according to Sharp, our reimbursement
22 amount is high, especially for our region and we are doing well
23 although there are always ways to improve, but overall, we are
24 looking good.

25
26 FF/PM Andersen stated that they also looked at other ways to
27 increase revenue, to include billing for Specialty Care Transports
28 (SCT), which requires a higher level of care of the medics for a lot
29 of those kinds of calls, but they realized after looking at this more
30 closely that we are already doing a lot of those transports but we
31 need a structure in place to bill for them separately and said those
32 are the STC charges listed on the report.

33
34 FF/PM Andersen advised they also discussed billing for treat and
35 release which some agencies do, and what this means is that if
36 medics go on scene, and patient contact is made but the patient
37 decides to not be transport, we can still charge them something.
38 FF/PM Andersen added that because of the transient, recreational
39 people in town for vacation that did not seem like the right way for
40 us to be handling that population, so they are not recommending
41 billing for treat and release at this time.

42
43 FF/PM Andersen addressed billing for long-distance transfers which
44 are transfers outside of any area hospital that we already transport

1 to. This would include anything outside of the Reno, South Lake
2 Tahoe and Truckee areas, because doing a long-distance transfer
3 takes one of our crews out of service for the district and gave the
4 example of going to San Francisco, saying the crew is out for the
5 time it takes to go to San Francisco, and back from San Francisco,
6 those are missed work hours for that crew, therefore they also
7 looked into increasing these fees.

8
9 Lastly, FF/PM Andersen stated that mileage is also charged, and
10 would like to try to keep the mileage rate in line with REMSA
11 mileage rates.

12
13 Chair Herron asked if there were any questions.

14
15 Director Costalupes asked what the mileage rate was.

16
17 AFC Barnum replied we are currently at \$22.08 per mile.

18
19 Chair Herron confirmed they are proposing to increase the mileage
20 rate to \$24.30 per mile.

21
22 FF/PM Andersen and AFC Barnum confirmed.

23
24 AFC Barnum added that REMSA just received a fee increase in May
25 and said they did not address their mileage, but AFC Barnum
26 assumes they will.

27
28 Chief Sommers complimented FF/PM Andersen and AFC Barnum
29 stating that they did a great job with the report, and he is happy
30 with it. Chief Sommers advised the Board to keep in mind that this
31 is REMSA's bread and butter, they do not have any tax subsidies
32 like we do, so exactly not matching REMSA or going above REMSA
33 is a goal of his, because we are tax based where they are not. Chief
34 Sommers added that with Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District
35 (TMFPD) getting in the mix, it made the data very complicated to
36 sort out as now entities and companies are mixing and presenting
37 their data as one and again recognized the job well done on the
38 report.

39
40 Chair Herron stated that was a great point.

41
42 Director McKay stated he agrees with the assessment and
43 expressed he felt sorry for the patients that have to personally for
44 the charges, that are young or not in economically in good shape.

1 Director McKay then inquired on accounts that are not paid and
2 asked if they were turned over to a third-party collection agency.

3
4 AFC Barnum replied we use a third-party ambulance billing
5 company, Sharp Ambulance Billing and confirmed they handle all of
6 that.

7
8 FF/PM Andersen added she had spoken to a contact at Sharp and
9 they described how they do their best to work with patients and
10 help with things like setting up monthly payment plans with
11 patients.

12
13 Business Manager Cary clarified that the district directs the
14 payment policy and said National Business Factors (NBF) is the
15 collection agency that we use. Business Manager Cary added that
16 she and Administrative Assistant Andreina Quiroz work closely with
17 NBF and if there is a case that is outrageous it is taken to Chief
18 Sommers for review and sometimes there are reductions in cost.

19
20 Director Costalupes asked if there was the ability to obtain a special
21 analysis for a patient before turning them over to the collection
22 agency.

23
24 Business Manager Cary replied we do our best to research
25 everything before we turn the account to the collection agency.
26 Business Manager Cary explained that Sharp sends us over a list of
27 accounts that should be turned into collections and that list is
28 reviewed by Business Manager Cary and Chief Sommers, and
29 anything under \$150.00 is written off because some of these
30 accounts are for people on Medicare.

31
32 AFC Barnum added that the payor class this will affect at 43% is
33 the commercial insured as their average bill will increase by \$98.00
34 and the other group this will affect are those who are on Medicare
35 without the supplemental insurance, although 90% Medicare
36 holders have the supplemental coverage, this is the other group
37 that will be affected.

38
39 Director McKay commented that unless Congress does not pass the
40 bill and the supplemental coverage goes away.

41
42 Chair Herron asked if there were any other questions or comments.

43
44 No further questions or comments.

1 Chair Herron stated she would entertain a motion if anyone would
2 like to make it.

3
4 Director McKay moved to accept staff's recommendation on rates
5 for the NLTFPD ambulance billing.

6
7 Chair Herron confirmed the information was listed at the bottom of
8 page 32 of the Board packet.

9
10 Secretary-Treasurer Bremer seconded the motion.

11
12 Director Costalupes third the motion.

13
14 Chair Herron called the question.

15
16 All in favor.

17
18 Motion passes unanimously.

19
20 Chair Herron congratulated FF/PM Andersen and AFC Barnum and
21 complimented them on a very nice job.

22
23 **OLD BUSINESS:** No old business.

24
25 *Legal Counsel Reports.

26
27 Legal Counsel, Emily Meibert had no report.

28
29 *Board of Directors Comments or Reports.

30
31 No report.

32
33 *Fire Chief Reports presented by Fire Chief Sommers.

34
35 Chief Sommers reported the Tahoe Summit will be held on August 16, 2022,
36 and asked that if any Board member is interested in attending along with
37 AFC Barnum, Division Chief (DC) Powning and himself, to please let him
38 know so he can assist with facilitating their attendance.

39
40 Chair Herron inquired on the location of this year's Tahoe Summit.

41
42 Director McKay commented it would be held at Sand Harbor.

43
44 Chief Sommers confirmed it would be held at Sand Harbor and that it is

1 hosted by Nevada this year.

2

3 Chief Sommers reported the Financial Officer position has been posted and it
4 will close August 1st, 2022. Chief Sommers also reported that he had made
5 an offer to a Fire Marshal, in which the individual had verbally accepted, and
6 is set to receive the offer letter today and once that is received more will be
7 released. Currently the Fire Marshals start date is for August 8, 2022.

8

9 Chief Sommers stated that there is a lot of talk about evacuations ever since
10 the Caldor Fire and it is taking up a lot of time. Chief Sommers said that he
11 met with Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) as they have asked
12 him to look and figure out an evacuation plan. Chief Sommers reported he
13 also met with Washoe County Emergency Manager, State of Nevada
14 Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and said those talks are
15 continuing. Chief Sommers is hopeful they will come up with a more
16 formalized plan and said the plan would be released soon and reiterated that
17 it is in the hands of Washoe County Emergency Management as NLTFPD
18 does not own it, contrary to popular belief.

19

20 Chief Sommers reported there is a lot of talk about Incline becoming a city
21 and said the Village League to Save Incline Assets president, Todd Lowe
22 reached out to Chief Sommers for a five-minute conversation and during the
23 conversation, Chief Sommers advised Mr. Lowe that NLTFPD will remain a
24 separate entity to that entire process as we have no desire to become part
25 of their city. Chief Sommers expressed to the Board that he is hopeful that
26 he did not speak out of turn, but he is passionate about this, and this is how
27 he would like to keep the district.

28

29 Director McKay commented that was spot on.

30

31 Chief Sommers added that with that, there is also now talk County wise
32 about regionalization of fire services. Chief Sommers advised the Board that
33 the County asked if we would like to participate, and he replied that we
34 would not participate in the regionalization perse but would like to be invited
35 to attend the meetings. Chief Sommers informed the Board that the first
36 meeting is a combined Washoe County, City of Reno, City of Sparks meeting
37 that will be held this Friday, July 22nd, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at 9th Street and
38 Wells Avenue. Chief Sommers confirmed he will be attending the meeting to
39 make sure they do not arbitrarily throw NLTFPD in there and say we are
40 going to participate. Chief Sommers explained it has been proposed that the
41 regionalization plan will be executed in stages starting with Dispatch and
42 move on to fire or wildland but is unsure as he has not seen the exact plan
43 yet and reiterated, he would like to stay out of it as he does not want to be a
44 part of it but if it comes to fruition he will bring it to the Board for direction

1 as more information becomes available.

2

3 Chief Sommers reported there are continued talks about the Public Safety
4 Pier and asked the Board to recall that at the last meeting he advised the
5 Board there is a proposal in the works and said the property owner has been
6 contacted and they will be participating at the next meeting with Tahoe
7 Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), however that meeting has not been held
8 yet so there will be more to come.

9

10 Lastly Chief Sommers reported that our Dispatch center, Grass Valley
11 Emergency Command Center (GVECC) has provided us with their annual
12 report.

13

14 Chief Sommers provided a copy of the report to the Board and added that
15 copies of the report were dropped off by the Battalion Chief per the Unit
16 Chief as they wanted to make sure the Board received a copy. Chief
17 Sommers said there is good information about the Dispatch center and how
18 they operate.

19

20 End of report.

21

22 Chair Herron thanked Chief Sommers and asked if anyone had any questions
23 for the Chief.

24

25 No questions.

26

27 *Chief Officers Reports presented by Assistant Fire Chief Barnum.

28

29 AFC Barnum reported on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) saying they
30 continue working on the Ground Ambulance Data Collections System audit
31 from CMS adding progress is being made on the operational side, and
32 believes they are about ready to turn it over to Business Manager Cary for
33 the financial side and to collect the rest of the data for CMS. AFC Barnum
34 advised this is something that we will be doing going forward and we look
35 forward to oversight as he believes we do a really good job.

36

37 AFC Barnum reported for Dispatch saying that Chief Sommers alluded to it,
38 we are in our third year, and we are happy with the service we are getting
39 for the money we are paying. AFC Barnum recognized it is a good deal and
40 we are moving forward and adapting every day. AFC Barnum said that
41 REMSA taking over dispatch for TMFPD has been a challenge over the
42 summit, but AFC Barnum believes everything has been worked out. AFC
43 Barnum reported they started with a soft launch in October and went full in
44 November and he thinks now they have just about everything figured out.

1 AFC Barnum added that we work closely with them and any time an issue
2 comes up it is solved.

3

4 AFC Barnum reported for Fleet, saying we are in the Fleet Rotation and
5 Replacement plan going forward. AFC Barnum advised the first to be
6 replaced will be Unit 12, and said he believes Chief Sommers has planned to
7 offer that Unit to other agencies and if we do not have any takers, we will go
8 through the auction process.

9

10 AFC Barnum reported for Training stating this month the focus is Multi-
11 Casualty Incident as it is in part of a requirement from Washoe County DEM.

12

13 AFC Barnum reported on staffing stating we currently have two single
14 resources out on fires one is in Yosemite and the other is in Idaho.

15

16 End of Report.

17

18 Chair Herron thanked AFC Barnum for his report and asked if there were any
19 questions.

20

21 Director McKay asked what the resources in Idaho and Yosemite are.

22

23 AFC Barnum replied it is a single resource, one as a Line Medic and the other
24 as a Medical Unit Leader (MEDL) on a team.

25

26 *Prevention Reports presented by Fire Marshal Donohue

27

28 Chair Herron stated the Prevention reports are included in the Board packet
29 unless Chief Sommers had anything else to add.

30

31 Chief Sommer replied he did not have anything else to add.

32

33 *Fuels Management Report as presented by Division Chief Powning.

34

35 DC Powning reported they are eight weeks into the season and the crews are
36 doing well as they are already completed over 70 acres of treatment cut in
37 addition to Slide Mountain who is on their third roll all to Eastern Nevada and
38 Southern Utah and Rifle Peak who just went to Elko and Ely this past
39 weekend on pre-positions, and they just got off a fire yesterday.

40

41 DC Powning reported all brush trucks are still in town and staying busy
42 focusing their efforts in Crystal Bay on the Nevada State Land along with the
43 NV Energy corridor.

44

1 DC Powning reported on Defensible Space stating 414 inspections have been
2 completed with 104 residences in compliance. DC Powning said that as far as
3 chipping goes, the smoke from the Caldor Fire had an impact on the
4 community as there are a lot of chipping request. DC Powning reported that
5 last year they chipped 271 residences and they have already chipped 214
6 residences as of yesterday. DC Powning reported that in North Tahoe, 734
7 residences were chipped last year, and this year 750 residences have
8 already been chipped and we are not even halfway through the season. DC
9 Powning wanted the Board to be aware of these numbers as DC Powning
10 reported he is receiving a lot of phone calls as to why chipping is not
11 happening and added that employees are even being kept from fire
12 assignments to try and stay on top of the chipping requests. DC Powning
13 reported the NV Energy assets will be utilized to increase horsepower.

14
15 End of report.

16
17 Chair Herron asked if there were any questions.

18
19 Director McKay complimented the crews doing the chipping saying he
20 believes they are doing a good job with chipping based on his neighborhood
21 as he has seen them there at least once a week.

22
23 *Business Manager Reports presented by Business Manager Cary.

24
25 Business Manager Cary began by thanking Public Information Office (PIO)
26 Tia Rancourt for all her hard work and organizing the Pancake Breakfast.
27 Business Manager Cary said the event takes a lot of help, and while she
28 receives help from the Board and Staff, it is still a lot of organization and
29 commented that it was a very fun event.

30
31 Business Manager Cary moved on to report that during a previous Board
32 meeting she was asked to obtain a percentage of where we stand with the
33 re-payments to the taxpayers, and said that according to Washoe County,
34 they believe they are 50% done and that everything must be done by June
35 21, 2024. With that, Business Manager Cary said we currently owe Washoe
36 County \$868,000 and asked the Board to recall the Board Workshop where
37 she explained that sometimes we do not have enough tax funds for them to
38 take the money out, so the funds are taken out in August. Business Manager
39 Cary added that our payment in July could not cover \$868,000 because 90%
40 of our taxes were already paid. Business Manager Cary advised the Board
41 they will see this on the financial statements.

42
43 End of report.

1 Chair Herron thanked Business Manager Cary.

2

3 *Public Education Information Officer Reports presented by PIO Rancourt

4

5 Chair Herron stated that the PIO report was listed on pages 35 and 36 of the
6 Board packets and deferred to PIO Rancourt for anything additional.

7

8 PIO Rancourt confirmed her report was in the Board packet and said she was
9 available for any questions the Board may have.

10

11 PIO Rancourt took a moment to thank the Board for all their support at the
12 Pancake Breakfast, saying it was great and everything went well, and
13 reported about 1000 people were served.

14

15 Chair Herron asked if there were any questions and said the Pancake
16 Breakfast was great and also complimented on it being a job well done.

17

18 *Local 2139 Union Reports presented by Union Representative.

19

20 Local 2139 Union President, Dale Spiker reported the Union sold about
21 \$3,000 worth of t-shirts at the Pancake Breakfast and said he was unsure of
22 the total profit but that the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation
23 (NNCCF) would be receiving a donation check on behalf of the Union.

24

25 Chair Herron congratulated Union President Spieker on the great
26 accomplishment.

27

28 ***NRS 241.020 re: Public Comment.**

29

30 This is a Time for the Public to Comment on any Matter, Whether or Not it is
31 Included on the Agenda of this Meeting.

32

33 Chair Herron asked Mr. Miller if he would like to introduce himself.

34

35 Incline Village Resident Charlie Miller introduced himself stating he has lived
36 in Incline Village for eight years but has been in the basin for 20 years. Mr.
37 Miller stated he previously worked for Incline Village General Improvement
38 District (IVGID) for about six years and decided to run and was elected for
39 the NLTFPD Board. Mr. Miller added that he now works for Tahoe City Public
40 Utility District (TCPUD) as the Engineering Manager, he is a Coast Guard
41 Veteran on the Fire Flight Team which is where his interest in getting
42 involved with NLTFPD came from. Mr. Miller added he worked with the
43 district on defensible space for IVGID.

44

1 Mr. Miller expressed he is excited to get involved and help.

2

3 Chair Herron thanked Mr. Miller and welcomed him to the team and knows
4 he was late to the meeting because of traffic which is no problem.

5

6 Mr. Miller thanked Chair Herron.

7

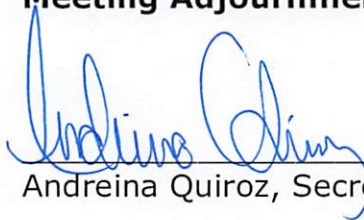
8 **Meeting Adjournment 12:26 p.m**

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Andreina Quiroz, Secretary


Susan Herron, Chairman

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