

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

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

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, Chair; Charley Miller, Vice-Chairman; Denise Bremer, Secretary-Treasurer; Phil Klein, Director; Ken Leijon, Director.

***Guests present:** Fire Chief, Ryan Sommers, NLTFPD; Assistant Fire Chief, Russell Barnum, NLTFPD; Division Chief, Isaac Powning, NLTFPD; Fire Marshal, John James, NLTFPD; Legal Counsel, Paul Cotsonis, NLTFPD; PIO Tia Rancourt, NLTFPD; Accounting Manager, Thelesa Montoya-Neves, NLTFPD; Battalion Chief Shayne Reed, NLTFPD; Captain, Monte Santos, NLTFPD; Captain, Scott Woodcock, NLTFPD; FF/PM Cory Crosby, NLTFPD; FF/PM Rex Neilson, NLTFPD; FF/PM Michael Peck, NLTFPD; Admin. Clerk, Mitzy Cruz, NLTFPD; Compliance Officer Erick Rodriguez, NLTFPD; Accounting specialist, Amanda Jillson, NLTFPD; Resident, Tom Millhoff.

***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: Approved as submitted.

Approval of Minutes of March 28, 2025, Board of Directors Meeting.

Review of Accounts Payable for March 2025.

Approval of the March 2025 Monthly Management Report.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Recognition of Captain Monte Santos' 16 years of service and retirement from North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District (NLTFPD), presented by Chief Sommers.

Chief Sommers invited Captain Santos to join him before the Board of Directors (BOD). He recognized Captain Santos for his 16 years of dedicated service. Captain Santos began his career in 1999 as a member of the Slide Mountain Hand Crew, rejoined the department in 2009, and was promoted to Captain in 2016.

Chief Sommers presented Captain Santos with a retirement shadowbox.

Captain Santos expressed his gratitude to everyone in attendance. He shared that firefighting becomes a part of one's DNA and, although he has loved every minute of his career, he is ready to begin the next chapter. He thanked everyone for their support and the colleagues he has worked with over the years, stating he believes there is no better career, as it provides the privilege of having two families. He concluded by thanking everyone once again.

Chair Herron then invited those present to join Captain Santos in the kitchen to enjoy desserts.

2. Presentation, Discussion of and Possible Action Regarding the 2025 Nevada Legislative Session, including pending Legislation affect Fire Protection Districts, presented by Fire Chief Sommers and District Lobbyist Michael Brown.

Chief Sommers began by introducing retired Fire Chief and current district lobbyist Michael Brown of R&R Partners.

Lobbyist Brown provided an overview of the 2025 legislative session, which began on February 23 and spans 120 days, with 49 days remaining before it concludes on June 2. At the start of the session, 1,227 bills were introduced. Following a recent legislative deadline, many bills did not advance. For the NLTFPD, Lobbyist Brown has been actively monitoring over 70 bills, 7 of which have failed and 7 remain active.

Lobbyist Brown outlined the legislative areas he tracks on behalf of the district, including Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire

Services, Fire Prevention, dispatch and 911 communications, Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), insurance (homeowner, commercial, and industrial), Medicare, Medicaid, open meeting law, collective bargaining, and taxation. He emphasized the importance of these issues to the district and noted that he works in close and ongoing communication with Chief Sommers to ensure the district's interests are represented throughout the session.

Lobbyist Brown discussed several key Assembly Bills (AB) and Senate Bills (SB) and provided brief information on each:

AJR1, AB57, AB102, AB142, AB278, AB437, SB10, SB319 AB329 and AB376.

Chair Herron asked if the BOD had any questions.

Chief Sommers asked if in utilizing the Far Plan for insurance, is the re-evaluation would need to be done in two years or if one can only be on the Fair Plan for two years.

Lobbyist Brown explained reappointment needs to be made with an insurance company every two years.

CFO Signorelli asked if there were any AB that would eliminate the Subsequent Injury Fund.

Lobbyist Brown replied he recalled seeing an AB about the Subsequent Injury Fund and would follow up on it.

Resident Tom Millhoff inquired about SB92.

Lobbyist Brown explained SB92 was an insurance bill that came from Senator Buck and said it did not make the deadline therefore believes it was cancelled. Lobbyist Brown provided further details on SB92.

Assistant Fire Chief (AFC) Barnum inquired about SB170.

Lobbyist Brown elaborated on SB170 and stated there will be an increase in funding for early detection cancer screening noting there will be a fiscal increase.

End of report.

1 **3.** Discussion, Possible Action and Direction to Staff Regarding Potential
2 Fire Service Consolidation with Washoe County, as presented by Fire
3 Chief Sommers.

4
5 Chief Sommers referenced a recent meeting regarding the matter
6 and stated that he attended specifically to ensure that NLTFPD was
7 not included in the discussions. He is now seeking guidance from
8 the BOD on how to proceed. Chief Sommers expressed the need for
9 clear directive from the BOD in case he is asked about NLTFPD's
10 exclusion. He noted that three recent letters to the editor have
11 singled him out and questioned why NLTFPD is not part of the
12 consolidation plan.

13
14 Chief Sommers turned the meeting over to Lobbyist Brown.

15
16 Lobbyist Brown recounted the 2002 service contract between
17 TMFPD and the City of Reno, clarifying it was not a consolidation.
18 The agreement ended in 2012 due to financial concerns. At that
19 time, the County invited NLTFPD to consider involvement,
20 recognizing its strength as a 474-fire district. The matter was
21 presented to the NLTFPD BOD for guidance.

22
23 There are three key considerations for regionalization: whether it
24 makes sense, whether it is cost-effective, and whether it improves
25 services. Currently, none of these criteria are met for our district.
26 We already maintain strong partnerships with neighboring agencies
27 through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), which provide
28 excellent service. We've communicated this position consistently,
29 and the Chiefs are aware of it. The current situation reflects a
30 broader challenge—fire departments have reached a cost level that
31 makes it difficult for local governments to sustain them, particularly
32 in relation to ad valorem revenues.

33
34 Lobbyist Brown and Chief Sommers have discussed the importance
35 of remaining engaged in regional discussions to stay informed about
36 developments and potential impacts. However, they emphasize the
37 need to carefully navigate involvement, making it clear that NLTFPD
38 is not actively pursuing regionalization. A key outcome of recent
39 discussions is the decision to conduct a comprehensive study of fire
40 services in Washoe County (WC). This regional study presents an
41 opportunity for NLTFPD to participate constructively. The study is
42 necessary, as there is currently no unified plans for development in
43 Northern Nevada or WC.

1 Lobbyist Brown emphasized the need for a comprehensive plan and
2 expressed his belief that NLTFPD should be included due to its
3 significant role in EMS and fire services. Lobbyist Brown has been
4 told NLTFPD is being used as a map for what the rest of the county
5 should look like and complimented the success of NLTFPD. Lobbyist
6 Brown encouraged participation at the Chiefs level at the meetings
7 as they will likely inquire on statistical information.

8
9 Lobbyist Brown referenced a 2019 legislative bill that permitted fire
10 agencies to utilize enterprise and county funds to build new fire
11 stations. While all Chiefs supported the bill, it was ultimately limited
12 to jurisdictions with populations of 700,000 or more and NLTFPD
13 was denied a part of that bill. NLTFPD was excluded because it did
14 not have a formal plan outlining future station locations or
15 expansion needs. Lobbyist Brown stressed the need for a
16 comprehensive plan and regional study to guide future
17 development.

18
19 Chair Herron inquired about the bill number referenced.

20
21 Lobbyist Brown responded that it was SB319.

22
23 Chair Herron then opened the discussion to the BOD.

24
25 Chair Herron stated that she had watched the SB319 hearing and
26 found the concluding comments to be both unimpressive and
27 unacceptable, particularly given the responsibility of representing
28 the people of Nevada. She confirmed that NLTFPD was excluded in
29 the testimony presented during the hearing. Chair Herron
30 expressed strong support for the Chiefs' continued attendance at
31 regional meetings, emphasizing that NLTFPD serves as a model for
32 others and would like them to stay out of the area. She reiterated
33 her belief that NLTFPD's success should be replicated and concluded
34 by stating her intent to either make a motion or vote with the BOD
35 to oppose consolidation while continuing to participate in planning
36 discussions.

37
38 Director Klein noted the contradiction between the bill's written
39 language—which includes NLTFPD—and the statements made by
40 those involved that suggest otherwise. He emphasized that if the
41 district is listed in the bill, it is included, regardless of what is being
42 said publicly. He stressed that the district must remain involved as
43 long as it is mentioned in the bill, as trust in the process is limited.

1 Director Klein added that if the bill's language is amended to
2 remove NLTFPD, then a decision on further involvement can be
3 made. Until then, he believes it is essential for the district to have a
4 seat at the table. He also commented on the challenges that arise
5 when county services, such as road maintenance and snow
6 removal, overlap, and noted public dissatisfaction in those areas.
7 He believes that including fire services in that overlap would likely
8 cause even greater concern among residents. Director Klein
9 expressed relief that the issue would go to a vote and, while he
10 feels confident in the likely outcome, acknowledged that nothing is
11 guaranteed. He reiterated that NLTFPD must remain engaged until
12 it is officially removed from the bill.

13
14 Lobbyist Brown agreed with Director Klein, highlighting that under
15 (Nevada Revised Statutes) NRS 474, fire districts can legally
16 operate across county lines. He noted that NLTFPD had previously
17 considered a joint district with Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection
18 District (TDFPD) under this provision and reaffirmed his support for
19 Director Klein's position.

20
21 Secretary-Treasurer Bremer supports staying involved in
22 discussions but opposes joining the regionalization effort, citing a
23 lack of benefit and potential harm to the district.

24
25 Director Klein said that unless they are going to solve financial
26 challenges, we could look at it, but they will not be doing that.

27
28 Vice-Chair Miller expressed his agreement with the comments made
29 and noted that he is currently involved in consolidation efforts in his
30 own area, where such efforts make sense. However, he emphasized
31 that the geographic differences in this region are too significant for
32 the same approach to be practical. He then asked if there were any
33 other departments in the area that were not participating in the
34 regionalization effort.

35
36 Lobbyist Brown responded that no other departments in the area
37 are opting out.

38
39 Vice-Chair Miller stated that if the district operated only a single
40 station, he would be more concerned. However, with three stations,
41 he believes the district is both diverse and adaptable. He agreed
42 with the others that NLTFPD should remain involved in the ongoing
43 discussions.

1 Director Leijon agreed with the discussion and questioned whether
2 the public in WC supports regionalization, asking Lobbyist Brown for
3 insight.

4
5 Lobbyist Brown said public concerns are largely due to
6 misinformation, especially about taxes, and stressed the need for a
7 comprehensive plan to clarify the facts and correct misconceptions.

8
9 Chair Herron confirmed with Lobbyist Brown that the bill is still
10 active and urged the BOD to watch the testimony. She noted that,
11 based on her observation, the Chiefs who spoke appeared to be
12 focused on the consolidation of administrative functions, which she
13 acknowledged could make sense. However, she felt there was a
14 clear disconnect, as the Senator's comments seemed to suggest a
15 broader consolidation effort. She also pointed out that the Airport
16 Authority was not present during the testimony. Chair Herron
17 stated she would be surprised if the bill passes but expressed
18 support for the proposed study, noting that some form of action is
19 necessary.

20
21 Lobbyist Brown suggested the BOD review the amendments to
22 SB319.

23
24 Director Klein asked if there was any information on the Local
25 Assemblyman's position.

26
27 Lobbyist Brown reported that Lisa Craven is opposed to the bill and
28 noted that some in the Legislature believe this issue should not be
29 handled at that level.

30
31 Chair Herron asked Chief Sommers if a motion was needed.

32
33 Chief Sommers responded that he had sufficient direction but was
34 unsure how formal the BOD wanted to be.

35
36 Chair Herron then made a motion to direct staff to stay involved with
37 SB319 and attend relevant meetings, while clarifying that the
38 NLTFPD is not currently considering consolidation with WC.

39
40 Secretary-Treasurer Bremer seconded the motion.

41
42 Director Klein questioned whether the BOD should take a firmer
43 stance and openly oppose SB319. Chair Herron responded that it's
44 better to maintain flexibility and leave strategic positioning to the

1 three leadership members.

2
3 Vice-Chair Miller added that they might ultimately support the idea
4 but do not want to interfere in the management decisions of others.

5
6 Chair Herron called the question, and the motion passed
7 unanimously.

8
9 **REPORTS:**

10
11 ***Legal Reports**

12
13 Legal Counsel Paul Cotsonis had no report for the BOD.

14
15 ***BOD Reports**

16
17 Chair Herron expressed her pride in the district's response following a tragic
18 incident at Diamond Peak. She commended the professionalism and
19 performance of the responding team and relayed that the Incline Village
20 General Improvement District (IVGID) team specifically praised
21 Firefighter/Paramedic Rex Neilson for his outstanding actions on site. She
22 extended her thanks to the entire team for their service.

23
24 ***Fire Chief Report presented by Fire Chief Sommers.**

25
26 Chief Sommers reported on the following items:

27
28 Chief Sommers reported on his recent trip to Washington, D.C., where he
29 met with federal delegates on behalf of the Western Fire Chiefs and the
30 State of Nevada. Discussions included support for several federal bills.
31 During the trip, he informed Senators Rosen and Cortez Masto about the
32 Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) audit and billing concerns. He expressed
33 interest in having Congressman Amodei revisit the Fire Reciprocal Act, as he
34 serves on the appropriations committee. Chief Sommers described the trip
35 as productive and beneficial.

36
37 Director Klein inquired about a news article regarding a new Western Forest
38 Fire bill involving Utah and Colorado and noted that Nevada and California
39 were not mentioned.

40
41 Chief Sommers confirmed Nevada should be included and described the bill
42 as favorable.

43
44 Director Klein asked about involvement from Nevada's Congressional

1 delegation, and Chief Sommers confirmed their support.

2
3 Chief Sommers confirmed their support.

4
5 End of report.

6
7 ***Chief Officers Report presented by Assistant Fire Chief Barnum.**

8
9 AFC Barnum reported on the following:

10
11 AFC Barnum thanked Chair Herron for her comments and highlighted the
12 district's system-based approach to emergency response. He noted that
13 FF/PM Neilson, though new to the district, has 14 years of experience and
14 provided critical care to the patient at Diamond Peak. Unfortunately, the
15 patient succumbed to injuries on scene. AFC Barnum emphasized the
16 importance of system integration and effectiveness, and he will relay the
17 BOD's appreciation to FF/PM Neilson.

18
19 End of report.

20
21 ***Prevention Report presented by Fire Marshal James.**

22
23 The Fire Prevention Report was submitted in the BOD packet and is available
24 for questions.

25
26 End of report.

27
28 ***Fuels Management Report as presented by Division Chief Powning.**

29
30 DC Powning reported there were no updates since his last report two weeks
31 prior and made himself available for questions.

32
33 ***Chief Financial Report presented by Chief Financial Officer Signorelli.**

34
35 Chief Financial Officer Signorelli reported on the following:

36
37 Ongoing discussions and negotiations with Workers' Compensation (WC)
38 carriers.

39
40 Financials are pending completion. She proposed a second budget workshop
41 between May 12-16, with May 15 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. being
42 confirmed.

1 An internal budget committee meeting is scheduled for May 7 to finalize
2 details.

3
4 She expressed appreciation to the BOD for supporting new hires in
5 administration, allowing her to focus on strategic financial management.

6
7 CFO Signorelli introduced Kim Horn from NV HR Team as the District's new HR
8 consultant.

9
10 CFO Signorelli will send out information on open office hours, the amended
11 BOD budget, and access to ClearGov.

12
13 End of report.

14
15 ***Public Education Information Officer Report presented by PIO**
16 **Rancourt.**

17
18 PIO Rancourt noted that her report was included in the BOD packet.

19
20 She added that requests for chipping and Defensible Space Inspections
21 (DSI) will open online on May 5, with services starting May 12, 2025.

22 End of report.

23
24 ***Local Union 2139**

25
26 No report was presented.

27
28 ***NRS 241.020 RE: Public Comment. This is a Time for the Public to**
29 **Comment on any Matter, Whether or Not it is Included on the Agenda**
30 **of this Meeting. No Public Comment.**

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33 **Meeting Adjournment 12:54 p.m.**

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37 Andreina Quiroz, Secretary

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44 Susan Herron, Chairman