

# **Truckee Fire Protection District Board of Directors**

## **A Job Well Done**

### **Summary**

The Truckee Fire Protection District is an independent special district responsible for fire protection and emergency medical transportation services in and around Truckee, California. The Truckee Fire Protection District is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the district's voters.

The 2010-2011 Nevada County Grand Jury found the Truckee Fire Protection District Board of Directors lacked education and training in the roles and responsibilities of Board members. The Board of Directors failed to follow their policies and procedures. The Board lacked personal engagement, independent thinking and had insufficient communication with the district staff and the public.

The 2013- 2014 Nevada County Grand Jury found all recommendations from the Grand Jury's Report of June 21, 2011 have been implemented. The Truckee Fire Protection District has made substantive improvements to the quality of service to district personnel as well as to the public and taxpayers of their district.

The members of the Board of Directors are now trained and knowledgeable of their roles and responsibilities. The Truckee Fire Protection District's finance policy now requires close review of all expenditures. Last, but certainly not least, the Truckee Fire Protection District is in active partnership with the community to actively communicate and to restore the public image of the Truckee Fire Protection District.

The Nevada County Grand Jury finds that significant and positive changes have taken place at Truckee Fire Protection District and recommends that the Truckee Fire Protection District continue on its current positive direction.

### **Reasons for Investigation**

On June 21, 2011, the 2010-2011 Nevada County Grand Jury (2010-2011 Jury) issued a report regarding the Truckee Fire Protection District (TFPD) Board of Directors (Board). The report listed numerous facts, findings, and recommendations that the Jury felt would benefit the TFPD and the citizens and taxpayers they serve. The 2013-2014 Nevada County Grand Jury (2013-2014 Jury) decided to conduct a follow-up investigation to determine whether the previous recommendations had been implemented, and if so, how the implementation has benefitted the citizens and taxpayers of the TFPD.

The Jury has the authority to investigate special purpose assessment or taxing districts, including those commonly known as special districts in Nevada County.

## **Background**

In California, special districts are a form of local government created by a community to meet a specific need. Most of California's special districts perform a single function such as sewage, water, fire protection, pest management, or cemetery management. There are approximately 2,300 independent special districts in California. Each is governed by an independent board of directors elected by the voters of their district or appointed to a fixed term of office by either a city council or a county board of supervisors. There are 24 independent special districts in Nevada County.

The TFPD is an independent special district supported by public funds. The TFPD is made up of 49 full-time personnel and nine part-time/volunteer members. The TFPD's budget for the 2012-2013 fiscal year was approximately nine million dollars. The TFPD is responsible for 125 square miles and is one of the oldest fire districts in the Truckee-Tahoe area of Northern California.

The TFPD is governed by a five-member board elected by district voters during the general elections held in November. The Board is responsible for setting policy and general administrative procedures.

The 2010-2011 Nevada County Grand Jury found the Board lacked education and training in the roles and responsibilities of Board members. The Board failed to follow their policies and procedures. The Board lacked personal engagement, independent thinking and had insufficient communication with the district staff and the public.

## **Procedures Followed**

The 2013-2014 Jury conducted an interview with a TFPD Board member and reviewed documents relating to the recommendations from the 2010-2011 Jury's report, published June 21, 2011.

## **Facts**

- Fa. 1** On August 31, 2011, the TFPD submitted a response to the 2010-2011 Jury's report.
- Fa. 2** The TFPD agreed with all ten findings of the 2010-2011 Jury.
- Fa. 3** The TFPD agreed with the 2010-2011 Jury's recommendations #1 (improved Board training), #3 (improved communications with personnel), and #4 (improve public image) and responded, "the recommendations have been implemented."
- Fa. 4** On Recommendation #2 (improve finance policy), the TFPD responded, "the recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be adopted and implemented by October 31, 2011."
- Fa. 5** Recommendation #2 has since been implemented by the TFPD.

- Fa. 6** All members of the Board have now attended training regarding the roles and responsibilities of board members in special districts.
- Fa. 7** The Board has developed and implemented a finance policy which requires the thorough review of checks to be signed and detailed supporting documentation for all TFPD expenditures.
- Fa. 8** The Board has improved on existing policy to facilitate open and ongoing communication with TFPD personnel.
- Fa. 9** The Board, TFPD management and staff have developed and implemented an active partnership in the rebuilding of the TFPD's public image and in actively communicating with their constituents to restore and maintain the public's trust.

### **Findings**

- Fi. 1** After an inquiry, the 2013-2014 Jury finds that significant and positive changes have taken place at TFPD.

### **Recommendations**

- R. 1** The 2013-2014 Jury commends the TFPD for its significant achievements and recommends that the TFPD continue to follow its current positive direction.

### **Responses**

No response is required.