

Private S. Tahoe plow driver in jail on myriad charges

A private snowplow driver was booked into the South Lake Tahoe jail Sunday night after allegedly taking out a light standard, traffic sign, flipping off police officers, using the loader as a potentially deadly weapon and trying to outrun officers.

Steve Beattie, 55, was clearing snow from an apartment complex on Ski Run Boulevard about 9pm Feb. 20 when neighbors called police, citing erratic driving.

Officers Jake Herminghaus and Ray Poole tried to get Beattie to stop the loader.



Steve Beattie

“The driver set the loader’s bucket to a height of approximately 4 feet. Beattie gave a middle finger gesture to the officers and then intentionally drove directly toward Officer Poole, still seated inside his patrol vehicle,” Sgt. Brian Williams said in a press release. “The bucket was now approximately head level to Officer Poole. Officer Poole quickly backed his patrol vehicle in an attempt to escape the intended impact. Due to a snow berm, Officer Poole was able to back only a few feet. This was just enough so that the loader barely missed an impact with his patrol vehicle.”

Beattie headed west on Terry Lane, but had to stop because it’s a dead-end street. Officers said the suspect remained

uncooperative and took his time getting out of the loader. Officers had to physically restrain Beattie on the ground to take him into custody.

Beattie was arrested on charges of misdemeanor driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, a felony charge of assault with a deadly weapon (his vehicle) upon a police officer, and a second felony charge of attempting to evade the police with wanton disregard for the safety of others.

Williams said Beattie admitted to using illicit drugs and to conducting snow removal operations without sleep for several consecutive days.