

No resolution in T.J. Maxx water supply dilemma

By Kathryn Reed

Before Lukins Brothers Water Company pitches an idea about how to supply the T.J. Maxx building with adequate water to fight a fire, the company is asking the California Public Utility Commission whether all ratepayers can absorb the cost of an interconnection to South Tahoe Public Utility District.

"I think if I were in the shoes of customers of Lukins, I would wonder why that is appropriate," STPUD board Chairman Eric Schafer said at Thursday's meeting.

South Tahoe PUD staff gave the board an update April 4 on the situation that was supposed to be resolved the first of the month. It could be a couple more weeks before the board is presented with a possible solution.

A temporary agreement is in place between the water districts that allowed the clothing store to open last fall. (This story has more background on the quagmire.)

"My interest is merely that there be adequate water pressure. How they get there I don't have an opinion," South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Bruce Martin told *Lake Tahoe News*. (He is also the fire marshal for the city. No longer is Lake Valley Fire responsible for those duties.)

Schafer also said he hopes one proposal is brought forward and not separate ones from Lukins and the Garfinkles. The Garfinkles own the building at the Y.

Hydraulic models need to be created to determine if South Tahoe Public Utility District could sustain water pressure if there were a major fire at the center that sent water into the

entire Lukins' system via the intertie.

No one from Lukins, T.J. Maxx or representing the landlord attended Thursday's meeting. No one from the city was at the meeting either, and this, two days after Councilwoman Brooke Laine said how she would be regularly attending these meetings.