

# Tahoe Paradise Park on unsure footing

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – There is no one to do maintenance, mow the lawn or book events at Tahoe Paradise Park.

This is because the board fired Steve Dunn, the park manager.

“It was a personnel issue,” Sue Novasel, Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District chairwoman, told *Lake Tahoe News*. She would not go into specifics about why Dunn was ousted last month from a job he had had for more than a decade.

Most of the board is new, with Judy Clot the veteran having been on the board since 2007. The others – Novasel, Joe Cardinale, Victor Babbitt, and Peter Nelligan – have been on the board less than a year.

Concerns have arisen with Dunn making money on the side. At a board meeting he admitted he bought chairs that he would lease to wedding parties. He was supposed to be the keeper of all the district’s records, but the board is having a hard time getting their hands on everything.



Tahoe Paradise Park’s board is

running the facility without a manager. Photo/LTN

Part of Dunn's financial package included living in a house on-site for free. He took in a base salary of more than \$30,000 a year. However, he was also entitled to 30 percent of every wedding that was booked as well as 30 percent from other group rental fees that were collected.

For the most part this was a seasonal job with a year-round salary. Dunn has until May 16 to move out. Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News* no board member has been inside the house to know what kind of condition it is in. Members aren't sure of the exact square footage and don't know what they could collect if they were to rent it or just to know the value if it were to be part of compensation package again.

Taxpayer dollars through Measure S – the recreation bond passed in 2000 – paid for a new roof and gas heater for that house.

In 2006 El Dorado County Auditor-Controller Joe Harn audited the Measure S books.

“The only unusual expenditures our examination has revealed to date related to the construction and acquisition fund by the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District,” Harn wrote in a June 26, 2006, letter to then county Supervisor Norma Santiago, who was on the TPRID board. TPRID had spent nearly \$30,000 on a skid steer loader and snowblower and \$4,300 to replace the roof.

The district receives \$50,000 a year from Measure S/R. In the last year it has received an additional \$10,000 from the bond measure.

Today, the district is grappling with how to go forward. The board agreed last week to solicit bids for landscaping, event planning and camp host. (Board member Nelligan is in charge of

getting information from perspective workers; he is at 209.985.8776.)

The camp host idea was brought up as a way to have someone at the park on a regular basis at little or no expense.

The board hopes to take action on those items at the May 28 meeting.

What to do about maintenance issues will first be addressed by a subcommittee and then brought back to the full board at the end of the month.

A brigade of volunteers is also being sought so some of the work is done in house without a check needing to be written.

"We are looking at other models and seeing where we go next," Novasel said in regards to the caretaker's house.

The bulk of the May 8 board meeting centered on how to get at least some of the work done that Dunn had been doing. The short-term answer is hiring multiple individuals. The long-term solution is still to be decided.

Also to be decided is if the park will continue to be in the wedding business. Some board members and park users believe the clubhouse should be used more for locals. But weddings are a revenue source, so others question the logic of turning off that cash spigot.