

LTUSD-SLT restructuring fields agreement



Soon South Lake Tahoe vehicles will not be seen at Lake Tahoe Unified School District owned fields. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Players won't notice anything different, but those who schedule and pay for the use of fields and tennis courts in South Lake Tahoe are likely to encounter fewer headaches going forward.

This is because this month city and Lake Tahoe Unified School District electeds are expected to ratify agreements that put LTUSD in control of these public entities. This means setting the fees, maintaining the facilities, paying for water-sewer-electric, and all of the scheduling. The latter has been under

the district's purview for a couple years.

The big change is oversight will be handled by one agency. The school board heard a presentation about this on Sept. 8 (no member of the public spoke), but won't take action until Sept. 22. The agreement is on the Sept. 15 City Council agenda.

In putting together the recreation master plan it was evident a streamlined approach was needed to eliminate confusion for the public. This included a one-stop shop for booking facilities, and a clearer understanding of what the costs are. The agreement speaks to those issues.

LTUSD Superintendent Jim Tarwater is looking to keep the same fees for locals and charge more for out-of-town groups. Tarwater said the current prices are comparable to other facilities, though they are a little on the low side.

"Tournaments are what I'm looking at. Once we have established people they'll keep coming up," Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The change means the city will no longer be maintaining property it doesn't own, nor will it be paying utility bills at the various sites. The city for a number of years had been doing so at some of the school district sites.

"For some reason over the years as lights would be installed they just got left in the city's name. The city is transferring utilities to the property owner," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In this first year of the agreement the city will pay the district a \$100,000 stipend to offset its new expenses.

The two agencies will evaluate that subsidy on an annual basis.

"They will hire a reservation clerk, grounds superintendent and tournament coordinator. The city wants to help offset that

because it helps support community recreation,” Kerry said.

Tarwater said the scheduling piece would change by hiring someone to work 20 hours a week, with flex hours to handle crunch time in the spring and early summer. More grounds crews will be hired, too.

Attracting tournaments could offset expenses as well as increase revenue. South Tahoe High School hosted three football camps this summer. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were served to the players, which netted the district a few thousand dollars.

“We are looking at a more full service approach and outreach,” Tarwater said.

Tarwater would also like to put a pot of money aside to fix the tennis courts at South Tahoe Middle School, as well as get more groups to use the high school courts. (He said the football players put tents on STHS courts this summer because they got scared when they saw a bear.)

The recreation center and ice rink are not part of the agreement. However, the ball field at Lake Tahoe Community College and the **fields that will be built** adjacent to the artificial turf one will come under a separate agreement among the three entities. Later this fall LTUSD, SLT and LTCC electeds are expected to create a joint powers agreement to handle the fields there.

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Notes:

- South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting is Sept. 15 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.
- Lake Tahoe Unified School District meeting is Sept. 22 at 6pm at the district office on Al Tahoe Boulevard.