



Meeting Minutes Nevada Search and Rescue Board

Attendance		DATE	Tuesday, June 8, 2025	
		TIME	10:00 a.m.	
		METHOD	Zoom/Teleconference: 1-669-219-2599 Meeting ID# 202 331 8963	
		RECORDER	Loren Borst	
Appointed Voting Member Attendance				
Member Name	Present	Member Name	Present	
Sheriff Dan Coverley - Chair	X	Carol Lynn	ABS	
Sgt Matthew Marlow	X	Sgt Garrett Bird	X	
Eric Antle	X	Patty Polish	X	
Kevin Haywood	X	SFC Ian Fritzsche	X	
Doug Fisher	X	Brian O'Neal	X	
Legal/Administrative Support Attendance				
Representative		Entity	Present	
Rodney Wright		SAR Coordinator–Nevada Office of Emergency Management	X	
John Fansler		Nevada Office of Emergency Management	X	
Samantha Ladich		Senior DAG – Nevada Office of the Attorney General	X	
Loren Borst		Admin – Nevada Office of Emergency Management	X	

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Sheriff Dan Coverley, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD), SAR Director, called the meeting to order. Roll call was performed by Rodney Wright, Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Quorum was established for the meeting.

2. Public Comment

Chair Sheriff Dan Coverley opened the first period of public comment for discussion. There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

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Chair Sheriff Dan Coverley called for a motion to amend or approve the draft minutes of the February 11, 2025, SAR Board meeting. Vice Chair Sgt Matthew Marlow, Las Vegas SAR Director, made the first motion to approve the minutes. Brian O'Neal, Clark County Deputy Fire Chief, Emergency Manager, seconded the motion. All were in favor with no opposition. Motion passed unanimously.

4. New Board Members

Rodney Wright, OEM introduced the three new members Brian O'Neal, Sergeant (Sgt)Garrett Bird, and SFC Ian Fritzsche.

Brian O'Neal introduced himself and indicated that he has replaced Billy Samuels with Clark County Fire Department as the Emergency Manager.

Garrett Bird introduced himself and explained that he has been with Washoe county Sheriff's Office for approximately 11 years, with five years at Nevada Highway Patrol prior to that. Sgt Bird explained that he took over recently for Josh Fisher, who recently retired.

Ian Fritzsche introduced himself and explained that he has been in the military for approximately 12 years, most of that on the civil support team. Mr. Fritzsche indicated that he is new to the joint operations center but is a quick learner and is eager to help and assist and advise in any way possible.

Chair Coverley welcomed the new members to the Board.

5. Discussion About State Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Teams

Brian O'Neal, Clark County Deputy Fire Chief, Emergency Manager, indicated that Task Force 1 is a state organization that is primarily represented by fire departments in southern Nevada. Chief O'Neal explained that a lot of requests come from northern Nevada, and that there currently is not a northern Nevada resource, but it is too difficult to organize travel for people so far away and also limits the ability to respond to either half of the state. Chief O'Neal informed the Board that there are many states that currently have state-based urban search and rescue teams who generally are able to arrive before the federal teams, and are a bit more flexible, have local contacts, and don't have the overarching incident support team (IST) support upon which federal teams rely, which allows them to be on the ground prior to the federal teams. Chief O'Neal noted that this opens up the discussion of whether Nevada would be well served by having their own state USAR team. Chief O'Neal explained that when initially looking at what teams should be supported, a plan was put in place for the teams currently supported by Nevada Task Force 1 with the federal caches, and as such, duplicating the cache that already exists in southern Nevada would be fairly easy and relatively inexpensive.

Chair Coverley questioned who would be the managing authority over this.

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Chief O'Neal indicated that it would be the state and live at the state level, be activated through the state, and funded through state program and authority.

Chair Coverley indicated his belief that this Board would not have the authority to do this but rather could make a recommendation to the Governor's Office.

Rodney Wright, OEM, confirmed that the Chair was correct, noting that what has happened with other states is legislation being put into place and funding sources secured. Mr. Wright reiterated Chief O'Neal's suggestion that a state USAR team could be deployed significantly faster than a federal one. Mr. Wright further reiterated that there would have to be money involved in building up a cache and looking at a training program, then indicated that the responsibility for the team training and deployment would likely reside at the Office of Emergency Management. Mr. Wright asked Chief O'Neal if this was to come to fruition, if the state USAR team would become part of the FEMA side or if it would be separate.

Chief O'Neal explained that it would be completely separate from the 28 FEMA teams and added that they would be available for supplemental deployment through the emergency management assistance compact (EMAC) if states were requesting additional assistance prior to the federal declarations.

Chief Brett Compston, OEM, explained that should the Board decide to recommend this, the methodology would be to figure out the proposal, composition, standup costs, sustainment costs, and then go to the next legislative cycle as something that would either be built into the budget or a separate bill draft review as the law would need to be changed to create the authority and then do the budget piece.

Chair Coverley indicated his belief that the most positive thing about this would be the availability of resources organized and established for both Nevada and neighboring states. As such, the Chair suggested to add this to a future agenda as an action item to vote on as a Board to bring forward to the next legislature.

Chief Compston reminded the Board that the next legislature is a little under two years out, but that this would be the time for the Board to begin figuring this out. Chief Compston further noted his belief that the biggest challenge would be finding additional people that aren't already engaged in search and rescue teams of some sort so as not to compete with the existing resources.

Chair Coverley indicated that he, for one, would be willing to have his members be part of this team.

Chief O'Neal informed the Board that Nevada Task Force 1 through southern Nevada currently staffs three teams that are available for Type 1 deployments and as such, has a roster of three teams consisting of about 220 people total. Chief O'Neal noted that the limitation is the cache, rather than the people, as the cache can only go to one disaster at a time.

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6. Public Comment

Chair Sheriff Dan Coverley opened discussion on the second period of public comment. There was no public comment.

7. Adjournment

Chair Sheriff Dan Coverley called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brian O'Neal, Clark County Fire Chief, Emergency Manager, made the first motion to adjourn the meeting. Sgt Garrett Bird, Washoe County Sheriff's Office, SAR Coordinator, made the second motion. All were in favor with no opposition. Meeting was adjourned 10:18 a.m.