

LTUSD, South Tahoe solidifying how to manage ball fields

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials missed a critical meeting Monday as the fields committee of the recreation joint powers authority centered its discussion on making an area at the old Al Tahoe Elementary School a multiuse field. This would require taking out some of the blacktop and the school board saying OK.

Steve Morales, facilities manager for LTUSD, is a non-voting member of the board. He was not at the Aug. 20 fields committee meeting. But he was at the school board meeting the following night.

At Tuesday's meeting he advocated for CACC (Community Athletic Coordinating Council) to continue to be a player in the whole process. He is the district's rep on the CACC board, too.

What was revealed Aug. 21 to the surprise of the school board is the district and CACC have been charging the same people to play on the fields owned by the district. In essence, they were double charged.

LTUSD board member Sue Novasel said that even though in the past her husband was involved with CACC, she is unable able to get any financial statements from this nonprofit. Neither could *Lake Tahoe News* for its November 2011 story on CACC.

As CFO Deb Yates put it, CACC can charge a membership fee, but won't be charging to use the field.

Morales was a cheerleader for CACC, saying how much they do and that the city and district won't be able to handle the

fields without CACC's input.

Superintendent Jim Tarwater, Yates and the board didn't sound like they agreed with his assessment.

"The city will have to deal with CACC," Tarwater said.

The school board agreed to spend (\$19,800 from special reserves) to pay for scheduling software. LTUSD, in an agreement with South Lake Tahoe, is taking over all scheduling responsibilities for the fields.

Still to be negotiated is the fee structure. The city charges one price and the district another. What the board said, though no vote was taken, is they want CACC out of the business of charging people to use they field.

A formal agreement between the district and city could be on the Sept. 11 LTUSD agenda.

The fields committee at its Sept. 17, 4pm meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport is expected to finalize its priorities. In the meantime, the list of 13 possible places to spend the \$500,000 it has in the kitty is being scrutinized to find out actual costs.

South Lake Tahoe, according to Councilwoman Angela Swanson who spoke at the school meeting, is working with El Dorado County on a detailed analysis of field needs in the basin. This will complement what the county has done on the West Slope. However, that analysis is not expected to be done until 2014.