

His comments included:

- I am not in support of continuing to grow the

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upper end of this organization. This would put seven chiefs in our organization. I work for Colorado Springs Fire which has 17 chiefs for 450 people; there is a disparity there.

- I would rather get the proper number of firefighters on the street first. I thought I was pretty clear last month.
- This is a cart-before-horse approach, trying to make a new position to match the individual you want to hire.

Director Jason Buckingham also said he had trouble with the timing since TLMFPD just temporarily removed an engine from service in May because staffing was short. See www.ocn.me/v17n6.htm#tlfmfpd.

Truty's comments included:

- We do have money in the 2018 budget for hiring two more people to get to 15 on shift first.
- Hiring a training officer would help support critical issues listed in our mill levy increase position, but we can still afford to hire him if the MLO does not pass.
- Having a training officer will make this district a more attractive place to stay and improve retention of people who are hired.

Trost's comments included:

- The goal with hiring is to have three staff members on every engine and two on every ambulance, or a minimum staff of 14 for the A, B, and

- C shifts by the end of the year,
- It is unrealistic to think we are not going to lose any more people this year. The plan is to keep updating lists of potential new staff members because of the long lead time.
- I understand we are short staffed and don't need any more white shirts or brass, but we are trying to build a team here and bringing on new people is one of the things that we do.
- We are not at our best level of training for our people, and a new training officer would provide consistency.

By a 4-3 vote, the directors approved creation of a battalion chief of training position. Jake Shirk, Roger Lance, Tom Tharnish, and John Hildebrandt voted in favor of it, while Buckingham, Terri Hayes, and Smaldino voted no. The consensus of the directors was that if the specific person being recruited did not take the position, the district would wait to fill the position.

Wissler Ranch structure fire described

TLMFPD responded to a report of "a small outside fire" on June 13 in the area of Lockridge and Roaming Drives in the Wissler Ranch subdivision east of Highway 83 and south of Palmer Divide Avenue/County Line Road. On June 28, Truty told the directors, "Our guys did an absolutely outstanding job given that they were going to a fire they had no idea what to encounter."

As it turned out, when the first truck arrived on scene at 11:57 p.m., 14 minutes after the call, the fire had actually started inside the garage, and flames were already extending into the living spaces. Truty said none of the callers to 9-1-1 specified that the house was on fire. The fire was declared under control at 1:43 a.m., and damage to the home was extensive, with the home not safe for occupancy. See www.ocn.me/v17n7.htm#tlfmfpd.

The firefighters attacked the fire using water stored in the trucks and sent water tender trucks to Kilmer Elementary School to refill with water from the pressurized hydrant located at the school, thus avoiding the need for a pumper truck to refill the tenders. There are no fire hydrants in Wissler Ranch.

However, there are three cisterns maintained in Wissler Ranch, and some residents wanted to know why that water was not used to fight the fire. Truty and Battalion Chief Jamey Bumgarner explained at a neighborhood meeting on June 26 (and on the district's website) that using the water from a cistern requires a dedicated pumper truck to transfer the water from the cistern to the tender truck. "Due to the initial dispatch of a 'small outside fire,' we did not have sufficient pumper trucks until 40 minutes into the incident that could have been used at a cistern," Bumgarner said.

Secretary Smaldino asked if the cisterns were in good service and what the standard operating procedure was for using them. "We definitely need to have a better policy on cisterns," Truty said, including needing to have the right units and apparatus to be able to use them. "If anyone at any point had said 'structure' or 'house fire' or anything like that, we would have immediately gotten two more tenders and more engines coming out right away," he said.

Vice President Lance asked if engine 2213 would have made a difference fighting the fire if it had been in service. Truty said he did not believe so. That engine was put back into service on June 15.

Truty also explained that a number of the residents were extraordinarily concerned about a "Black Forest-type fire" starting, and Bumgarner spent time explaining to them at the neighborhood meeting how the conditions that night were different from the day the Black Forest fire started and how TLMFPD has procedures in place they would have used to notify residents if they thought they were at any risk. Truty said, "I think we walked away (after the June 26 community meeting) with a very good feeling from everybody about not only how it was handled but getting all their questions answered."

Note: See <http://tlfmfire.org> to read the June 14 press

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