

along Woodmoor Drive. The consent agenda was passed.

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m.

on the third Thursday of each month in the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monu-

ment. The next meeting will be on Jan. 19.

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Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Dec. 6

2017 budget approved; Shamrock Station 2 day-to-day operations will be reduced

By Lisa Hatfield

The Dec. 6 Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) Board of Directors meeting included approval of the 2017 budget, discussions about the status of Wescott's Shamrock Station 2 at Highway 83 and Stagecoach Road, and future staffing constraints. The recent City of Colorado Springs' full annexation of the southern half of the formerly dual-taxed area of the Wescott district will result in a drastic drop in future Wescott tax revenue in 2018. All revenue from the dual-taxed area will cease in 2019.

The board also agreed to delay putting Wescott Station 3 up for sale while adjacent neighbors researched their claim on the title to the Station 3 property now that the district no longer

has a use for it.

Director John Fredell was excused.

2017 budget and appropriations approved

Chief Vinny Burns said that almost all overtime pay has been eliminated for 2017 as a cost-saving measure; however, some overtime could be authorized at his discretion to cover a catastrophic day with multiple sicknesses or true "red flag" fire danger days. The recent intergovernmental agreement between DWFPD and the City of Colorado Springs will cut the district's service area in half and permanently reduce its revenue by about 33 percent in 2018 and by 66 percent in 2019. He said by the end of 2017, the district

plans to have \$1.3 million total in savings to help get through the next few years. See www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#dwfpd1115.

The meeting included thoughtful questions from some of the directors and from five district residents: former Wescott board treasurer and volunteer paramedic Dennis Feltz, Gleneagle North Homeowner's Association Treasurer Gary Rusnak, Gleneagle Civic Association representative Bill Lowes who is a former Wescott board president, Lois Williams, and Chris McCloy. Burns and Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich tried to show in the 2016 and 2017 budgets how much savings were being set aside in anticipation of leaner revenue years ahead and in what line item(s) those amounts

showed up.

- Funds rolled over from 2016 – \$1.07 million
- Total 2017 revenue – \$2.28 million
- Total 2017 expenditures – \$2.68 million
- Reserves set aside in 2017 – \$311,900

Burns explained that because the district's property owners had previously voted in favor of "de-Brucing," the Wescott board did not have a TABOR requirement to worry about and would be allowed to keep those extra funds in reserve.

The directors unanimously approved the 2017 budget, the resolution appropriating funds for the budget, and the resolution certifying the 2017 mill levy at 7 mills.

President Greg Gent read

the 2017 district budget message, which included:

- It will begin the process of lean budgeting to ensure sustainability through December 2018
- Maintain operational expenses for two fire stations
- Decrease vehicle maintenance and fuel expenses
- Provide salary step increases for career firefighters
- Eliminate all overtime pay except for unforeseen fire danger and sickness
- Station 2 may not be staffed continuously due to reduction in staffing
- The district is chartered to provide fire protection and first response medical services

Burns clarified that the goal is to keep five staff members on each shift. One of them is the American Medical Response (AMR) paramedic paid for by AMR. DWFPD outsources its district ambulance service. A Wescott emergency medical technician (EMT) drives the AMR ambulance, and the contract with AMR helps defray the cost of that EMT/driver's salary. AMR's paramedic is not cross-trained as a firefighter. Assistant Chief Scott Ridings said that Wescott is a combination district that also includes volunteer firefighters, and said the district would be able to supplement the staffing next year when a firefighter is out sick or on vacation.

Shamrock Station 2 to remain open for now

Eliminating most overtime pay means that, "there will be times when staffing will be reduced," and on those days, all staff would operate together out of Station 1 on Gleneagle Drive. "But Station 2 will not be closed," Burns said several times.

District homeowner Rusnak stated that if the district starts losing employees, it might become necessary to consider closing Station 2 earlier. Ridings said, "I don't think we are closing anything. We might sometimes redistribute the staff," and have volunteers fill in. **Note:** Wescott calls Station 2 the "Shamrock Station." It opened in 2012 at 15505 Highway 83 after the land was donated to the district by David Wismer, owner of the adjacent 500-acre Shamrock Ranch property. The only debt the district holds now is a \$1.2 million loan to pay for the building's construction. See www.ocn.me/v9n9.htm#dwfpd, www.ocn.me/v12n4.htm#shamrock.

Mill levy steering committee in the works
The residents in attendance repeatedly expressed interest in helping the district with its planning for publicizing the reasons



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