

the DWFPD budget uses words such as reserve, carryover, and committed versus uncommitted funds, causing the lines to be blurred between what can be spent and which funds need to be held back. Simpson suggested calling the carryover an escrow fund since it is used to save over several years for big purchases, such as new fire trucks.

Note: Special districts like DWFPD can carry revenue over from year to year rather than follow TABOR because the district has been "de-Bruced," according to legal counsel Matt Court. The term refers to Douglas Bruce, who authored TABOR.

Rusnak cautioned the board and firefighters to consider this disputed total when creating the 2019 budget, suggest-

ing there may be less carryover into the new year.

After the presentation, Director William "Bo" McAllister asked rhetorically how their auditor didn't find these mistakes.

Chief Vinny Burns was appointed to prepare the 2019 budget with Rusnak assisting him. The appointment was approved 4-1 with Director Joyce Hartung dissenting.

By statute, the preliminary budget must be presented to the board by Oct. 15, at which point a budget hearing is scheduled and the draft is made available for public review. The budget must be adopted by Dec. 15.

Joint DWFPD and TLMFPD meetings continue

Burns told the board the meetings with TLMFPD are going well and personnel on each side are meeting with one another. The two districts are in discussions for a possible merger. Director Larry Schwarz said these face-to-face meetings allow both departments to see the pride they all take in their jobs. Schwarz said there is excitement on both sides because it's a positive step forward for both agencies.

Burns said the committee should wrap up their report next week and present it at the next committee meeting scheduled for Oct. 9.

Burns noted Station 1 will have an open house on Oct. 13 from 10 a.m. to 2

p.m. for Fire Prevention Week. Officers will be available to take visitors on station and truck tours. The event is free and open to the public.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

The next DWFPD Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 16. The regular meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Drive. Please call (719) 488-8680, a non-emergency number, for more information, or visit www.wescott-fire.org. Wescott is also on Facebook and Twitter.

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Sept. 26

Board receives advice on collective bargaining; 2019 budget presented

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Sept. 26 Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting, directors received advice from lawyers Cindy Coleman of Range Law, representing TLMFPD, and Naomi Perera of The Kelman Buescher Firm, representing members of the Monument Professional Firefighters Association. Chief Chris Truty presented the first draft of the 2019 budget to the directors.

Director Jason Buckingham was excused.

Collective bargaining discussion continues

The directors had their concerns addressed by attorneys representing TLMFPD and Monument Professional Firefighters Association. A lengthy technical

discussion explored the many elements to decide whether implementation of a Meet and Confer process or a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) should be pursued by the board.

Background: This spring, the members of the Local 4319 of the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) requested a collaborative working agreement to officially document the status quo within TLMFPD. See www.ocn.me/v18n4.htm#tlmfpd.

- Coleman's comments included:
- There is no other statute within the private sector like Meet and Confer or CBA in Colorado.
 - The Colorado Firefighters Safety Act is unique in Colorado, and every district must have at least two em-

ployees who can meet and confer with their employer to discuss pretty much everything except compensation.

- Collective bargaining, if the employer voluntarily recognizes the need, requires 75 percent of the prospective bargaining unit vote to proceed, followed by 5 percent of the last electoral vote.

Perera interjected, agreeing with Coleman's summary, but with the caveat that Senate Bill (SB 13-025) or the Colorado Firefighters Act, which prohibits firefighters from striking, does not in any way preempt or force the board to stay within the framework of the act. "Special fire protection districts can always voluntarily recognize an agreement and implement a board resolution outside the framework of SB 13-025," Perera said.

Lt. Franz Hankins, president of Monument Professional Firefighters Association, said he could guarantee a petition of 100 percent support for a Meet and Confer resolution from the union members.

Coleman stated that "ultimately the

board decides what will be contained in the resolution If they are not comfortable with any content, it can be rejected." Truty said, "This process will take a considerable amount of time." See www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdle/LaborRelations

The board consensus was that Perera would deliver a draft Meet and Confer resolution for Truty and Coleman to review before presenting it to the board. Perera said, "This would give the firefighters a seat at the table and serve both parties well."

Wescott merger update

Truty reported that talks are still moving forward in a positive way for a possible merger with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District and that a report would be generated for review at the next TLMFPD/DWFPD merger committee meeting on Oct. 9.

2019 budget presentation

Truty presented a draft 2019 budget proposal, noting concern over the loss of revenue due to the Gallagher Amendment. The current mill levy plan does not take into account the effect of Gallagher, which over time decreases the residential assessment rate (RAR) from the current 7.2 percent to 6.1 percent by 2020.

District voters passed an 18.4 mill levy in November 2017, but only 18.1 mills of that is currently being used, and this may need to be adjusted/re-certified to offset the losses incurred by Gallagher. A gross projected loss from the RAR of \$964,385 is expected due to Gallagher in 2019. Truty said, "Approving the assessment rate would provide competitive wages and increase monies for benefits and training." Director Tom Tharnish said "The board should not lose track of this."

Financial report

Treasurer John Hildebrandt read the year-to-date financial report ending in August, 58 percent through the year, noting:

- Property taxes received to date were \$7.468 million (98.81 percent of the budgeted amount).
- Specific Ownership Taxes received were \$572,182 (112.19 percent of budget).
- Ambulance revenues were \$575,712 (71.96 percent).
- Fire equipment and vehicle expenses are high and over the budgeted amount.
- Training expenses are 120 percent above normal.
- Wages overall are 2.72 percent under the budget.
- Overall expenses are 1.88 percent under budget.

Hildebrandt said, "Training is good, and it is what we are supposed to do."

Truty requested the board approve a non-budgeted expense of \$26,199 to add to the budgeted expense of \$37,080 after receiving a matching grant from the state for four LifePak monitors. A motion to approve the additional funding was carried 6-0.



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Sat.-Sun., Oct. 6-7, 9 am - 4 pm
 There is something for everyone – inflatable bounce houses, pumpkin picking at the patch and even spooky story-telling to set the mood! There'll be food trucks on-site with your favorite local fare and skilled artisans from across the Pikes Peak Region featuring the finest in commemorative crafts and memorabilia.



Every Sat. in Oct., 9 am - 4 pm
Every Sun. in Oct., 12 - 4 pm
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