

some changes they made to the draft since the last meeting. These were:

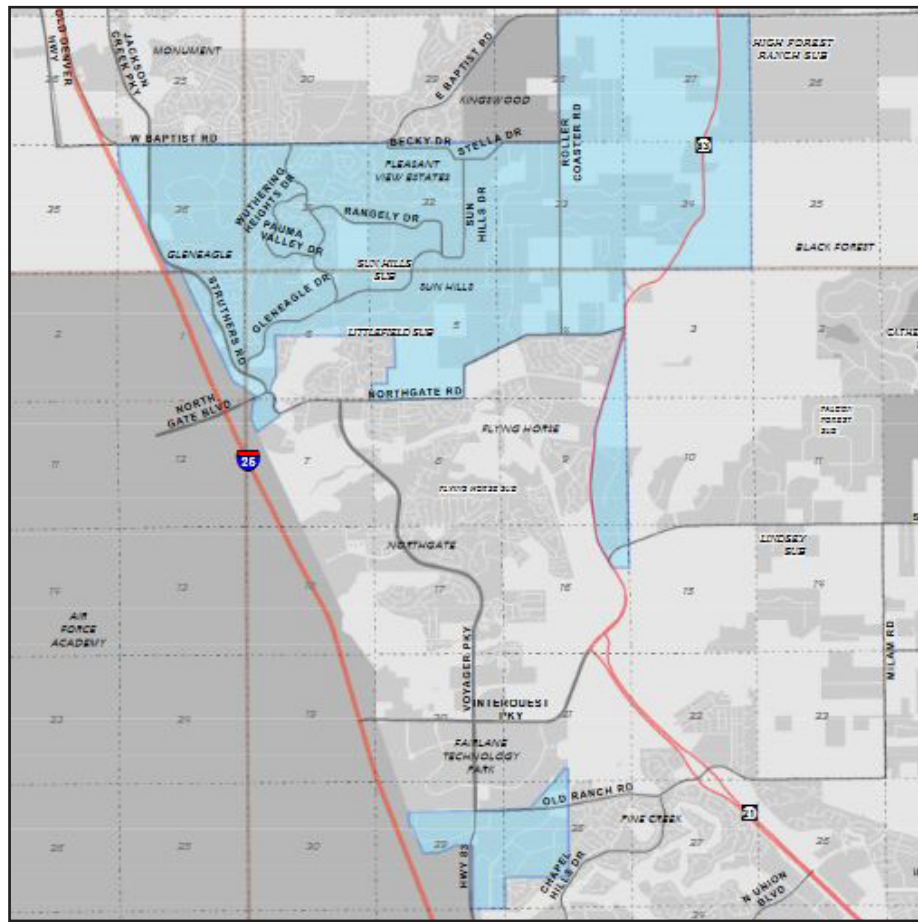
- Salary increases were scaled down from the October draft. Exempt employee salary totals will increase 21 percent, and nonexempt employee salary totals will increase 11 percent in 2019.
- The budget will not include a wildland reimbursement.
- The administrative staff will receive a pay raise from \$40,000 in 2018 to \$49,000.
- The Morale and Welfare fund will be decreased to \$2,000, down from \$7,500 in 2018 because these costs are covered elsewhere.
- The 2019 audit will cost more than in previous years, so Burns is requesting \$12,000 to cover the higher fee.
- The cost of health insurance is increasing 14 percent.
- The budget includes \$70,000 to replace a command vehicle that is 10 years old.
- The Tinder request suggested at the September meeting wasn't included in budget. Burns said they may do a budget reallocation to purchase it later in 2019.

The board will hold a public hearing on the 2019 budget at 7 p.m. Dec. 4 at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Drive. The public may get a copy of the draft budget by calling 488-8680. Resident Steve Simpson asked the district to consider putting the draft budget on its website, but the decision was made to provide paper copies for residents to pick up at the station.

Board weighs subdistrict dissolution

Director Gary Rusnak and legal counsel Matt Court discussed the possibility of dissolving the subdistrict and absorbing the associated mill levy into the underlying district. Rusnak said it made sense to have a single legal entity, and wanted to explore the idea as a long-range plan in case Wescott moves toward a merger with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District.

Court explained the two legal entities—a district covering the entire Wescott area with a mill levy of 7.00, and a subdistrict superimposed over the northern section with an addi-



Above: This map shows the current service area of the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District in blue. One vestigial southern section remains from before Colorado Springs annexed land in stages, moving north from Woodmen road but avoiding this one Wescott island. *Map courtesy of El Paso County Assessor.*

tional levy of 14.90, which voters approved last year. Because the two are separate legal entities, a full dissolution would require a vote by the community in order to increase the underlying subdistrict's mill levy to 21.9 so that Wescott can continue with the same level of revenues. Court explained the steps Wescott will need to take to dissolve the subdistrict, which included:

- Petitioning the court
- Holding a court and public hearing
- Bring to a vote the dissolution and increased mill levy for the district. Elections can occur in November of any year, or in May of even years only.

Board Secretary Mark Gunderman wondered about the benefits of this change overall and asked specifically about the southern island section of the district along Old Ranch Road and Highway 83, questioning how a full 21.9 levy would affect them. This part of the district was never included

into Colorado Springs Fire District as it acquired territory moving north and has longer response times from Wescott, so they only pay the 7.00 mill levy. Director Larry Schwarz suggested Wescott should have a more formal contract with Colorado Springs Fire Department for this area since Colorado Springs responds to many of their calls. He said the ethically correct thing to do would be for Wescott to continue to collect less from this area because of Colorado Springs' coverage. *See www.ocn.me/v17n9.htm#dwfpd.*

This discussion ended without a vote.

Station 2 land decisions move forward

Court explained that the Flying Horse North development behind Station 2 will include 80 to 100 new homes in its first phase. The station sits at the intersection of Stagecoach Road and Highway 83, which is also a main access point into and out of the new development. *See www.ocn.me/v18n10.*

htm#epbocc.

Easements have been requested by the developer on Station 2 property to put up a sign. The temporary grading easement and permanent slope easement would be exchanged for a parcel of land conveyed to Wescott, which Ridings said could be used as a turnaround for rigs. Court will ask the developer to pay legal fees for review and revision of the easement documents up to \$5,000.

A motion passed unanimously to allow legal counsel to move forward with finalizing the easements. A second motion to request legal fees be paid by the developer also passed.

Merger committee talks budget
Burns and Ridings met with TLMFPD Chief Chris Truty and Deputy Fire Chief Randy Trost to compare district budgets. Ridings said TLMFPD has much higher expenses than Wescott. When the chiefs began budget discussion, each was applying their own financial accounting philosophies to the other's budget, Ridings told the board. He said they need to understand each other's viewpoints, and apply them as needed.

After the holidays, Rusnak and TLMFPD Treasurer John Hildebrandt will continue the budget discussions. The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

The next DWFPD Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec 4. The regular meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Drive. Please call 488-8680, a nonemergency number, for more information, or visit www.wescottfire.org.

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**Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Nov. 14
2019 budget hearing; negotiations with union approved**

By Natalie Barszcz

On Nov. 14, the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) held a public budget hearing, reviewed a third draft of the 2019 budget, and approved Chief Chris Truty and Deputy Chief Randy Trost to conduct collective bargaining negotiations with the Monument Professional Firefighters Association. They also heard an update on the potential merger process with the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD). Treasurer John Hildebrandt was excused.

Budget round three

Board President Jake Shirk motioned for the TLMFPD board to open a public hearing for the proposed 2019 budget. Shirk asked if anyone was speaking in favor or opposing the proposed 2019 budget. No public comments were made on either question and the board approved closing the public hearing 5-0.

Truty reminded the board of the following additions and changes made

TLMFPD (Continued on 20)



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