

ployees were approved for a 2019 pay raise, while our teams have nothing, said McAllister. And he continued, “their firefighters union is moving toward collective bargaining because they are not pleased with their salaries,” noting he’s never heard that from any of the Wescott firefighters. See <https://ocn.me/v19n1.htm#tlmfpd> and <https://ocn.me/v18n12.htm#tlmfpd>.

McAllister called out Schwarz’ comment during the December meeting when he said Wescott was a “stepping stone” agency. Wescott firefighters took offense, McAllister told Schwarz, saying he has seen nothing but professionalism from this district. Schwarz defended his

previous statements, saying he was not questioning the firefighters’ dedication but said a 10-square-mile community just can’t provide the same amount of salary increase as other districts with larger areas covered and more corresponding revenue.

Schwarz said he hopes the board can figure out a way to increase Wescott salaries and hire more firefighters, even suggesting selling some equipment to make money to pay for salary increases. Minimum staffing levels for engine and ladder trucks are a big concern for him. Schwarz saw a unit that should have four people onboard leave on a call for service with only two people,

which is unsafe and not up to National Fire Protection Association standards.

Ridings and Schwarz agreed to discuss these concerns. DWFPD’s 10-year strategic plan acknowledges staffing increases are needed, Ridings said, adding that with conservative spending they should be able to hire three more paid firefighters in 2019, although this was not specifically a budget request. For the past month, Ridings said, they have been able to train volunteers so that one of the four staff on engine and ladder trucks is a trained but unpaid volunteer, saving the community money while providing good service.

To review DWFPD’s strategic plan, see http://wescottfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Strategic-Plan_2018.pdf.

TLMFPD merger discussion

Schwarz and Rusnak said they have been communicating with TLMFPD Treasurer John Hildebrandt, emailing ques-

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