

throughout the department's coverage area.
Court cautioned Rusnak that the question has to be

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as specific as possible so voters know exactly what they are voting on. Schwarz said this discussion should continue so they can simplify the government entity but also provide the same service to everyone in the district. "We provide little or no services to" the southern portion of the district "so they shouldn't pay the same," said McAlister.

Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District, March 20
Knockout blizzard, Station 2, and potential impact fees

By Lisa Hatfield

The directors of the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) met on March 20 to discuss the aftermath of the bomb cyclone, staffing issues at Station 2, why fire districts should be able to collect impact fees from new development, and more.

Storm response

Fire Chief Bryan Jack and Lt. Rick Robirds described the district's response to the March 13 storm. Six firefighters, including some part-timers and volunteers, were on duty that day and worked to rescue stranded motorists until well after midnight.

About 40 people, including 10 children and one elderly lady using an oxygen concentrator, sheltered overnight at Station 1, where staff provided blankets, pillows, and some food. Some district vehicles out on the roads could not move because they were surrounded by so many cars buried in snow drifts. "Black Forest Road was a parking lot," said Robirds.

President PJ Langmaid, Director Rick Nearhoof, Treasurer Jack Hinton, Vice President Rick McMoran, and Director David Hoffpauir had many specific questions about things they had heard happened.

Problems that will be investigated in more detail in the after-action report included pre-storm preparations about the district's vehicles and communication with local churches and the Red Cross.

Nearhoof emphasized the point that BFFRPD residents recently approved a mill levy, and he wanted to be sure they knew they were being cared for when their "whole neighborhood was hammered" by the storm. Hinton wondered "if we might have ramped up and been more prepared" as a small community fire department trying to help its residents.

Langmaid said, "The community thanks you for all the hard work you did! But we as an agency can further grow and develop standards and professionalism.... If you need more equipment or training, you need to let

The next Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. April 16 at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. A volunteer pension meeting will be held before the meeting, starting at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 488-8680 or see www.wescottfire.org.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

the board know."

Jack will share the official after-action report with the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management and the BFFRPD board in April.

Station 2 staffing

Station 2 is at 16465 Ridge Run Dr., southeast of Hodgen and Black Forest Roads. In the financial report, Hinton said the only area of concern through the end of February was above-budgeted overtime pay in an attempt to keep Station 2 staffed more days of each month, which the board had made a priority last year.

Jack said it was staffed 25 of a possible 28 days in February, but it would not be staffed that frequently in March. The problem is when part-time staff (who may be full-time with another district) sign up for a shift but then cancel right before that shift. Volunteers are required to work a certain number of hours per month too, but these can be in half-day shifts.

Langmaid said volatility in staffing did not meet the needs of the community, and while he didn't want the board to get involved in day-to-day operations, the board might need to consider making a staffing policy.

Flying Horse North impact fee example

Jack said fire chiefs from all over El Paso County have petitioned the county for a way to collect impact fees from new developments as they are being built so that fire districts can hire more staff and buy equipment to cover increased costs. However, in June 2017, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) withdrew the resolution to adopt the El Paso County Fire and Emergency Services Impact Fee Policy. See www.ocn.me/v17n7.htm#epcbocc.

Hinton met recently with County Commissioner Holly Williams to renew the impact fee discussion. She took notes and said she would get back to the district.

The board discussed the example of the Flying Horse North development underway now, which has been investigating the possibility of adding a 45-foot-tall clubhouse and a 200-room hotel. If that were to be approved by the county, it would mean BFFRPD would need to buy a ladder truck just to serve that new development. "That is what impact fees are for," Hinton and Langmaid said. Jack said the Elizabeth Fire Protection District in Elbert County approved wording for impact fees and he would share that with Williams and the BOCC.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. However, the next meeting will be April 24. See www.bffire.org.

Lisa Hatfield can be reached at lisahatfield@ocn.me.

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