

icy.

- The process began in 2018 and the district did not hear anything from the City Council until July 2020.
- The exclusion process is lengthy, and all the properties need to be looked at individually.

Hinton said Helzer should wait to submit the petitions for exclusion until the policy has been reviewed by the board and the district has the chance to coordinate with the city to prevent any lapse in fire protection coverage.

Helzer said CRS-32-1-501 lays out very clear specific policy and procedures associated with this process, and it allows the board to pass a resolution directly without a policy in place, given that fire protection is already provided by the Colorado Springs Fire Department and the residents have been paying dual taxes and receiving dual coverage for seven years. The property owners are simply asking to be added to the 600-700 dual taxation residents currently pending exclusion, said Helzer.

Arkowski said the documents should be sent to the board secretary and then the process could begin.

Vice Chairman Nate Dowden concurred with Langmaid and recommended the petitions for exclusion be sent immediately to the board secretary via certified mail, but he voiced concerns regarding signing for certified mail during COVID-19 and the possibility of a missed delivery.

Langmaid agreed to coordinate a time for Helzer to hand deliver and sign for the petitions of exclusion, after which the sealed envelope would be passed unopened to the board.

Langmaid said communication between the district and Colorado Springs City Council legal office has been next to none since Nov. 3 and the pending exclusion timeline of the 392 homes is unknown, but the district should be notified once the city files the exclusion with the court.

Langmaid said he is coordinating a planning meeting between the Colorado Springs Fire Department, the Colorado Springs City Council and its legal counsel and the district's legal counsel to come up with a phased exclusion plan that incorporates the municipality and the district. See www.bffire.org.

Colorado Springs dual taxation resident Colleen Murphy made a comment via Zoom chat on behalf of the dual taxation residents: "We completely understand and greatly appreciate the work of Fire Chief Langmaid."

Note: Langmaid joined the board in May 2014 and was elected chairman in May 2018 before resigning to become interim chief in May 2019 and the permanent chief in June 2020. Chairman Nearhoof has been a board member since May 2014, and Treasurer Jack Hinton joined the board in May 2016.

Public presentation of the proposed 2021 budget

Langmaid's comments on the proposed budget included:

- An increase was required to the insurance for general liability and workers compensation that has not previously been entirely accurate.
- The wage schedule has not changed since last month and will be 47.6% of the total budget for 2021.
- The General Obligation Bond will be paid in full in 2021, which will unencumber those residents still paying the bond.
- The wildland deployments during August through October generated a bill to the state for \$230,000 for expenses. The staff volunteered for the deployments, but it cannot be guaranteed as a revenue source in the future and the deployments create wear and tear on equipment.

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Nov. 3, 10, 17, and 24

Grandwood Ranch initial plans, Rollin Ridge final plat approved; Highway 105 project update

By Helen Walklett

During November, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved rezoning and preliminary plan requests for the proposed Grandwood Ranch development north of Higby Road. The final plat application for the residential portion of the Rollin Ridge development also received approval.

Grandwood Ranch rezone and preliminary plan

- An additional \$30,000 was added to the proposed budget for mission-critical radios for use inside structure fires.
- The district plans to purchase 11 additional quality used Self-contained Breathing Apparatus units in the spring.
- There is no change to the Capital Improvement Fund.
- Electricity is budgeted less for Station 1 in 2021 now that the radio tower and the training facility are tracked separately.

Hinton said the district is in the early planning stages of a possible lease/purchase for up to three large apparatus units, and the board's decision to move forward on the request for proposals will depend on the economy and COVID-19. The potential purchase is part of the strategic plan to create uniformity in the pump capacities on firefighting apparatus. See www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#bffrpd.

The 2021 budget in its final form is scheduled to be approved at the Dec. 9 board meeting, said Nearhoof.

Chief's report

Langmaid said the following:

- There has been an uptick in COVID-19 calls within the Black Forest community.
- The BFFRPD Palmer Ridge Regional Training Center at Station 1 is now fully operational, and area fire departments have also had the opportunity to use the facility for live fire training.
- The training division is researching a professional six-to-eight-week Fire Academy course for 2021, which could potentially include other partner agencies.

SHIELD616 fundraiser

Langmaid said that despite the bitter cold and social distancing, the department managed to pull off a spectacular event for donors who raised money for the SHIELD616 equipment fundraiser in September. SHIELD616 founder/President Jake Skifstad presented a full armor package to each BFFRPD staff member, and KOAA News 5 covered the event on the evening of Nov. 12, outside the bay at Station 1.

Based in Black Forest, SHIELD616 is a national nonprofit that raises money for protective equipment for police officers and fire departments. Langmaid said he suspects there will be a good relationship between BFFRPD and SHIELD616 for many years to come.

Nearhoof thanked SHIELD616 for its dedication to the fire and police services, and the district definitely appreciates the donation of the equipment. See www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#bffire.

Cell tower property access

Nearhoof said he had met with property owner Richard Painter to discuss concerns regarding access to his property and the BFFRPD repeater cell tower on Swan Road. No-trespassing signs will be posted on his property, and permission will need to be granted for access to his property.

Inaccuracies addressed

Langmaid said numerous inaccuracies had occurred in OCN's November edition that were likely due to COVID-19 distancing during the recording of the meeting, and he noted the following:

- No clubhouse has yet been built in Flying Horse North, however, there is a proposal.
- No state law dictates developers install 30,000-gallon cisterns, however, there is a provision in the county's land development code to address structural firefighting water.
- Classic Homes and the district did reach an understanding for a fair and reasonable amount for impact fees specifically within Flying Horse North, should the county agree, which it has not,

and there was no binding agreement. See the Jan.15, 2020 board minutes at www.bffire.org. Langmaid said the engine that makes the region and nation strong is the economy, and developers are an integral part of that economy. "Classic Homes is a valued leader in the region and they are good partners, and my office and Classic Homes work great together to jointly solve problems through respectful and meaningful dialogue, even though we do not always agree," said Langmaid.

My office and Classic Homes have collaborated on several projects to improve public safety, but that does not mean there is not room for improvement. Things are moving forward and water issues are not uncommon in the West, and with proper planning, and if Cherokee Water District gets involved, the water issues may be resolved, said Langmaid. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Corrections

In the November issue of OCN, the Oct. 21 BFFRPD article should have read:

- "Hinton meant to say: In the north part of the district we have a proposed clubhouse that is above height restrictions."
- "BFFRPD had a non-binding agreement with a developer to collect impact fees."
- "Langmaid said the county writes the land development codes that directly impact the district when it comes to water, then does not enforce the codes. He said there are hundreds of homes being sold with zero water for fire protection and there was zero accountability when he tried to "drill down" on how that could have occurred. See www.bffire.org/files/641a7ddae/2020+Guidance+document+water+supply+v.2.pdf."

The archived article is available at www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#bffire.

OCN regrets the errors.

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. Due to COVID-19 social distancing, meetings will be held via Zoom until further notice. For joining instructions, updates, and minutes, visit www.bffire.org.

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