



Above: During the COVID-19 pandemic, Donald Wescott firefighters will respond to calls differently than before. Dispatch will ask a series of questions during a 911 call to evaluate a patient for COVID-19. Crews will be dressed in protective gowns or overalls, hoods, masks, and eye protection. It does not necessarily mean your neighbor has COVID-19, and it does not mean that you are in immediate danger. Wescott asks that if you see this activity taking place, please keep your distance from the scene. *Photo courtesy of Donald Wescott Fire Protection District.*

cation to vote. Burns said election officials and the public will be required to wear masks and gloves. “This way, they will stay out of main living areas of station,” Burns said, noting fresh air will be vented through the bay, weather permitting.

COVID-19 calls will likely surge with state opening

Burns told the board two line items have been created in the budget to account for costs relating to the novel coronavirus. As of the March 31 meeting, costs were about \$10,000, Burns said.

Wescott staff members are coordinating their response to the pandemic via video conference with regional partners including northern fire departments, hospitals, and county and state Offices of Emergency Management. Burns thanked numerous local businesses and residents who have brought food, extra protective gear, and hand-written notes including several from a local child who was just learning to write, “It made my day. It made me laugh and grin,” said Burns.

During the March 31 meeting, Burns said nine employees had been isolated as a precaution when they presented flu and cold-like symptoms. But during the April 21 meeting, Assistant Battalion Chief Scott Ridings said no one has contracted COVID-19.

Ridings said there was no fire loss in February, but in March there was one structure fire and a large state park fire for which Wescott provided mutual aid.

Ridings is anticipating a big jump in call volume over the next two months when the state begins to re-open, but he said they are prepared for that to make it through the spike.

Audit receives clean opinion

Tom Sistare from Hoelting and Co. audited the district’s financials, which received an unmodified or clean opinion. Sistare noted the following:

- Receivables on the balance sheet were up from the prior year by \$130,000 due to an increase in property taxes.
- On the income statement, wild-land fire income total was \$181,000, but with expenses, the net was \$119,000.
- Overall fire and EMS expenses were up 11% from 2018 due to increased staffing costs.
- Taxes were down \$552,000, which related to changes in taxing entities in the overlapping southern part of the district.

Sistare suggested a segregation of duties within the Finance and Accounting Department, but that isn’t possible at this time.

LED lighting project

An LED lighting changes project was requested for Stations 1 and 2 for a total cost of \$5,400. This would include a bay lighting changeout at Station 1 and the bay and living quarters lighting from Station 2. The project would reduce overall electric costs and spare firefighter turnout gear, which is susceptible to ultraviolet lighting degradation. Separately, Chairman Mark

Gunderman said it was unofficially approved outside the regular meeting and requested a formal approval at the March 31 meeting. The project was unanimously approved.

District website updates

At the March 31 meeting, Gunderman asked if the district’s website could be updated. The chiefs agreed it could provide a tremendous amount of training and background for the public.

Battalion Chief Sean Pearson was assigned to lead a website update committee, and volunteer Rachael Dunn will work part-time to make the changes. Dunn is working to provide more information on all Wescott’s social media platforms including Twitter, Instagram, and Nextdoor.

Shwarz requested a few changes

during the meeting, to which Pearson confirmed board comments will be taken, but a chain of command is in place to filter any change requests.

Director Dwayne Garrett was concerned about the security used for the district’s website and received assurances from Ridings.

Other discussion items

- At the Nov. 19 meeting, Burns requested \$300,000 to purchase a new tanker truck. Chief Balvanz said they should take receipt of the vehicle this summer at a cost of about \$276,465. See <https://ocn.me/v19n12.htm#dwfpd>.
- Gunderman asked for the existing strategic plan to be updated to include future capital projects and a long-term plan for Station 3.

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VISION STATEMENT

for Bakhita Mountain Home:

**“A community where love
heals, restores and
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For more information or to register visit: <https://runsignup.com/Race/CO/Monument/WalkforSurvivors>

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