

BFFRPD (Cont. from 14)**Executive session—performance evaluation**

The board moved into an executive session at 7:51 p.m., as per Colorado Revised Statutes §24-6-402(4)(f), personnel matters, for the annual evaluation of Chief PJ Langmaid's job performance.

When the board returned to the regular session, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Pension Board of Trustees' "special meeting"

Nearhoof called the Pension Board of Trustees' "special meeting" to order on Oct. 28 to approve funeral benefits and a survivor pension benefit.

Director David Hoffpauir was excused.

The board approved the minutes of the Sept. 15

meeting, 4-0.

Nearhoof requested the board approve a \$1,000 funeral benefit to the survivors of both volunteer pensioners, Imelda Evans and Kathy Russell.

The board approved both funeral benefits, 4-0.

Nearhoof requested the board approve a monthly survivor pension benefit of \$127.09, which is 50% of the vested pension amount, for David Russell, the surviving spouse of Kathy Russell.

The board approved the survivor pension benefit, 4-0.

Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said the district currently has 19 retired volunteer pension recipients and the minimum amount of eligibility is 10-20 years for retired volunteers. The district is required to hold a minimum of one Pension Board of Trustees meeting per year.

The next regular pension board meeting will be held in 2022.

The "special meeting" adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Note: As of June 30, 2021, the volunteer pension fund balance was about \$1.4 million.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday every month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. For updates, agendas, and minutes, visit www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Oct. 4 and 27**Unification progressing; 2022 budget discussed**

By Natalie Barszcz

The Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board held a special meeting on Oct. 4 to approve funding for a survey. At the regular meeting on Oct. 27, the board received an update on the unification process and a second presentation on the proposed 2022 budget. The board approved the 2022-26 district strategic plan, made a change to the district observed holiday schedule, and received numerous updates.

Director Terri Hayes was absent.

Wescott unification update

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said:

- The draft feasibility study from Emergency Services Consulting International Project Manager Dan Qualman has been received by Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones of Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD), and both he and Jones are reviewing the draft.
- He recommended a joint study session with both the DWFPD and TLMFPD boards in early November, to include a presentation of the feasibility study by Qualman.
- The final decision will be made by the boards of directors from DWFPD and TLMFPD and be presented to the fire chiefs.

Kovacs said the feasibility study demonstrates the value-added benefits to the community of a unification, and he highlighted some of the benefits found in the study:

- The avoidance of building a fourth fire station in the south of the district has an economic benefit to TLMFPD. See www.ocn.me/v19n5.htm#tlmfpd and www.ocn.me/v19n6.htm#tlmfpd.
- The apparatus and water tender fleet required for the Wildland Urban Interface would be increased.
- The unification is fiscally achievable and sustainable, and the district has strong economic growth.
- Operational benefits would reduce response times up to 50% in certain areas and staff a water tender on a first-alarm structure fire with the ability to staff a third ambulance when required.
- Staffing would increase with an extra two personnel per shift, which would allow the merged districts to manage vacancies for fire academies and allow staff to attend training events.
- A third ambulance when in service could easily generate \$300,000 annually.
- EMS and fire prevention services would be enhanced.

President John Hildebrandt said the annexation by the City of Colorado Springs in 2019 created a significant impact to revenue for DWFPD and a unification failure would be a detriment to both districts. See www.ocn.me/v17n8.htm#dwfpd.

2022 budget—second presentation

Kovacs said the El Paso County assessor notified the district of a \$1,200 reduction in the previous property tax revenue assessment for 2022. The district is expecting \$12.9 million in total revenue, and he proposed the following major increases to the 2022 budget:

- In response to inflation, a 4% cost-of-living allowance across the board, for staff and firefighters, is proposed to counter the cost of food and fuel, an increase of \$350,103.
- An increase of \$94,625 for training and tuition costs, to include all training, for a total of \$217,150.

- Station 1 requires the added security of a fence for firefighter privacy, some work order changes to include greater utilization of space, re-painting to match the existing color, and an additional \$100,000 is required to make the changes.
- A consulting expense for the Wildland Urban Interface pre-plans for \$45,000.

Kovacs also requested an additional increase of \$175,765 to the communications expenses for First Arriving. The proposed budget includes the HAAS Alerting System, First Watch (data management), and First Due software. The total proposed communications expense is \$412,265.

Division Chief of Community Risk/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner said the following:

- The installation of First Arriving at each of the three stations would allow the district to run more efficiently.
- First Arriving integrates multiple data streams on one screen for everyone to see.
- The IT upgrade would be a "wise investment" to organize the firefighters from shift to shift with live streaming and constant updates to include weather data and Colorado Department of Transportation cameras.
- The daily operational data would also be collected by Active 911 and PS Trax for future referencing of the operations management systems.
- First Arriving would also allow the executive staff to display messages, information, and recorded videos to all stations simultaneously.
- After the initial outlay, recurring fees will be about \$1,700 per year.
- The purchase of four screens would be an additional expense, and the administration office would be included in the rollout of the system.

Battalion Chief Mike Keough said from an "operational perspective," it would cut down on about 40 minutes of updates on morning shift change. Staff would not have to log into about 17 systems, and real time information would be available at all three stations all the time.

Board comments

Secretary Mike Smaldino requested the district explore the true cost of the Station 3 remodel and asked for an update on the availability of two sets of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for personnel.

In response, Kovacs said:

- Station 1 and Station 3 overlap in area of responsibility, and the estimated \$400,000 in the proposed 2022 budget for the Station 3 remodeling is high.
- It would be a waste of funds to use all of the funding if a decision is made to relocate a station.
- The budget includes two additional extractors, and 90% of the contaminants are removed by soap and water, with the last 10% of contaminants extracted out of the station.
- Alternatively, a third-party vendor could be used, but it would create a three-week turnaround time before returning PPE to the district. Bumgarner said PPE has a 10-year lifespan and Lt. Mauricio Ayala is planning to replace 33 sets over the next three years, at eight to 10 sets per year.

Kovacs requested the board review the 2022 budget documents and contact the staff with questions before the public review at the Nov. 17 board meeting.

Vice President Roger Lance thanked Kovacs for answering all his questions during the presentation.

2022-26 district strategic plan

Kovacs said the request made by Hayes to include

public opinion via a survey has been incorporated in to the 2022-26 district strategic plan. Kovacs requested the board adopt the plan as presented. See www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#tlmfpd.

The board adopted the 2022-26 strategic plan as presented, 6-0.

Observed holidays

Hildebrandt requested the board remove Colorado Day (first Monday in August) from the current district-approved observed holiday schedule and add the federal holiday Juneteenth Day (June 19) to the schedule.

The board approved the changes to the district-observed holiday schedule, 6-0.

Station 1—remodel update

Kovacs said the following:

- The Station 1 remodel is almost complete, but the station can't be occupied until the generator and appliances have been installed.
- The color selected for the building addition does not match or complement the existing building, and although it will require an additional expense to match the existing building color, it will look better.
- We have to make it right and fix all of the overlooked issues such as firefighter security, lights that dim in corridors, and areas of under-utilized space.

Hildebrandt said that it was unfortunate that certain small items were not identified earlier in the process, and the usability for firefighters should be enhanced.

Chief's report

Kovacs said the following:

- Lt. Mike Smith organized the first-ever Driver/Operator academy, and DWFPD personnel attended.
- The district is consistently responding with mutual aid ambulance support with neighboring agencies.
- The lieutenant promotion selection is underway, and assessment will occur on Nov. 16.
- Paramedic Stephanie Soll will be the full-time EMS coordinator starting Nov. 1. The early start date is due to the recent retirement of Deputy Chief Randy Trost and to assist Battalion Chief Kris Mola in his temporary battalion chief of training position. It will be a great opportunity for Mola to gain experience.

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said the district received 97 applicants for the two open firefighter positions, and 36 have passed the written test. Seventeen applicants will be invited to interview on Nov. 4.

In memorium

Kovacs said Battalion Chief Mike Dooley's father, Wayne Dooley, passed away, and on Sept. 7, the celebration of life was well-represented by the district and surrounding agencies.

Board member recognition

Kovacs recognized Hayes for receiving the Tourism Leadership Award from Visit Colorado Springs on Oct. 14. Hayes is the board president and chief executive officer of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Visitor Center.

The regular board meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Special meeting—survey work for bore project

Secretary Mike Smaldino and Directors Terri Hayes and Tom Tharnish were excused on Oct. 4.

Kovacs requested the board approve up to \$25,000 for a survey at Station 1, and said:

- The Town of Monument (TOM) received the go