

goal is to eventually hold a sixteen-week fire academy at BFFRPD.

- Manitou Springs Fire Department used the BFFRPD training facility for a successful firefighter academy in April.

Chief's report

Rebitski said the following:

- An under-sink plumbing failure caused a major water leak at Station 2 during an evening in April around 8 p.m. Operations were not affected and Servpro assisted with the clean-up within 40 minutes to mitigate the problem. Dry-wall repairs will be made by Servpro, and the plumbing issue was corrected the next morning. Insurance is covering the cost.
- He is working with the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) to develop new plans for

commercial construction to find water solutions for fire code compliance. The district hopes to present the solutions to the board in May, and then the requirements will be posted on the district website.

- Flying Horse North is now able to provide a fire hydrant off its 8-inch main at Allen Ranch Road. The Pikes Peak Regional Building Department is aware that the hydrant has yet to be tested and approved by BFFRPD.
- The district is holding strong to a commitment to maintaining a high level of water in new construction areas, and developers are now approaching the district with their water plans.
- BFFRPD provides free fire mitigation inspec-

tions for existing homeowners and new construction. Insurance companies are starting to ask for inspections and proof of 30 feet of defensible space around properties.

Exclusion process

Rebitski said Langmaid and the BFFRPD legal counsel had met with new Fire Chief Randy Royal of CSFD and the City of Colorado Springs legal counsel to discuss the next phase of exclusions. The next phase plans to exclude the remaining municipal parcels west of Black Forest Road but not the ones that are unincorporated and solely receiving services from BFFRPD. The joint plan and resolution for board approval is expected at the May regular board meeting, said Rebitski. See www.ocn.me/v20n8.htm#bffrpd and www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#bffrpd.

Annexation looming

Rebitski said El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs expect vast amounts of the BFFRPD current service area to be annexed to Colorado Springs as part of its master plan in the coming decades.

Financial update

Treasurer Jack Hinton said the following:

- The district has \$2.083 million in the bank.

- \$235,000 in the Emergency Reserve Fund.
- \$249,000 in the Capital Reserve Fund.
- \$94,000 in the TABOR account, retaining 3% of the budget as required by law.
- Liability and workers compensation was the biggest expense in March.
- Overtime remains high and will adjust in time as the new hires come on board.
- Fuel costs have skyrocketed, and the power loss during the blizzard incurred an extra fuel cost to run the generator.
- The district is currently operating without an accountant.

Hinton confirmed during public comments that the administrative assistant position was upgraded to administrative officer with a realignment of duties to absorb three separate positions. The administrative officer position now incorporates the accounting position and has a higher pay scale, but the elimination of three other positions resulted in a cost savings, said Hinton. The new administrative officer is undergoing training now and will start full-time in June.

The board unanimously accepted the financial re-

port as presented.

Note: Copies of the monthly financial reports have not been made available to OCN in 2021.

Praise for former board member

Black Forest resident Linda Smith requested the board minutes recognize the achievement of the former BFFRPD board Treasurer Jayme McConnellogue on her recent promotion to deputy fire chief of the CSFD. Smith said McConnellogue spoke out and insisted on financial transparency for the district after the 2013 Black Forest Fire before becoming board treasurer. McConnellogue now holds the highest office ever held by a female within CSFD.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 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. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for May 19 at 7 p.m. For Zoom meeting joining instructions, updates and minutes, visit www.bffire.org.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, March 29 and April 20

Interim fire chief sworn in; FLSA dispute continues

By Allison Robenstein

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District met March 29 for a special meeting to extend an offer to Warren Jones, Ph.D. for the interim fire chief position. During the April 20 regular monthly meeting,

Jones was sworn in along with two new paramedics.

Swearing in ceremony

Paramedics George Gaugesen and Cory Trottier were sworn in just before Jones took the oath of office. He will replace Vinny Burns, who retired after 40 years of

fire service.

Jones began his career as a firefighter for the Poudre Fire Authority in Fort Collins in 1977. He served in a variety of positions, ultimately becoming battalion chief. He served as fire chief for the Evans Fire Protection District in Evans, Colo., for eight years. Jones holds three degrees, all from Colorado State University: a bachelor of arts degree in Education, a master of arts in Political Science, and a doctorate in Education and Human Resources.

Burns thanked the community for its support through the years. The district was formally started in 1981 after Donald Wescott, a Colorado Springs firefighter, was killed in the line of duty. "We've come a long way baby," said Burns, noting how proud he has been to serve with his staff and volunteers. Burns said he is planning to travel and see family.

Secretary Larry Schwarz said to Burns, "I've known you for 27 years and fought

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