

He asked the board to collaborate in advance with leadership before taking any positions on controversial subjects. Miller advised the board not to respond to public comment at the meeting but have someone contact the speaker later or add

it to a future agenda. He ended by talking about the Education Alliance of Colorado (EAC), a local advocacy association.

**Board meeting highlights**

The following items were highlighted at

the regular board meeting:

- Holmes reported on pre-service training and preparation before the start of the school year.
- Holmes said he has started the process of seeking funding for phase 2 and expects it will take over a year to put a plan together.
- Chief Financial Officer Marc Brocklehurst highlighted that the unaudited net loss in 2020-21 for MA is anticipated to be \$540,000, down from the budgeted amount of \$695,000.
- Board member Chris Dole recapped the discussion on adding a board member and recommended opening a seventh seat, making a one-word change in the bylaws, voting on it at the next meeting, and leaving the vacancy unfilled until the April 2022 election. Some elections will elect three board members while others elect two.
- Holmes reported that he plans to hire a second assistant principal at the west campus rather than try to replace Richardson. The two assistant principals would divide duties where Laura Barret would cover

K-2 while the new hire would cover grades 3-5. This will be an interim solution for this year since the hiring season is past.

- St. Aubyn reminded parents not to park in the church parking lot and asked that parents have patience during the carline assuring them that things would calm down in a couple of weeks.
- The board unanimously agreed to make the sunshine list be provided to the board president and secretary for communicating about meetings.
- St. Aubyn clarified that the board would continue to record its board meetings as required by law. It may still hold some special meetings virtually which would be open to the public.

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The next regular board meeting is scheduled Thursday, Sept. 9 at 6 p.m. at the west campus library. The meeting will be in person only. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. For more information, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at [jackieburhans@ocn.me](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me).

*Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Aug. 17*

**Unification process progressing; interim fire chief extension**

*By Natalie Barszcz*

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) board meeting held Aug. 17, the board received an update on the unification process with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) and discussed an extension to the interim fire chief contract. The board also discussed 2021 budget savings measures and the planning process for the 2022 budget.

Director Joyce Hartung was excused.

**Unification process update**

Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones said the following:

- Emergency Services Consultants International (ESCI) visited the district in early August and interviewed staff and personnel, and toured and took pictures and gathered information, records, statistics, and financial data for the feasibility study. See [www.ocn.me/v21n7.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n7.htm#dwfpd).
- The district is expecting feedback in October, and a work session will need to be scheduled for late October.
- ESCI also talked to TLMFPD, some of its board members, and DWFPD board Chairman Mark Gunderman.
- ESCI noticed that both districts have “a lot of wind behind their sails right now,” and suggested making the unification happen earlier while momentum is high to avoid future setbacks.
- An authority could be in place on July 1, 2022, with the unification completed as soon as Jan. 1, 2023.
- The consultants also noted DWFPD has some fleet issues, and the district should expect some sticker shock when it needs replacing. That is not new information, but ESCI is able to provide some solutions to resolve the issue with or without unification.
- Both district chiefs will meet with their attorneys to help move the unification along quicker over the next few weeks.
- As we get closer to receiving the ESCI feasibility study report in October, anticipation and anxiety will be high.

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**Interim fire chief extension**

Jones said the six-month interim fire chief contract is set to expire the day after the October meeting and that he would be willing to extend it through the end of the year. Jones requested the board consider an extension to the contract at the next board meeting.

District Attorney Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor & Pascoe PC law firm in Denver said she would make a short amendment to the existing contract for the extension in time for the September meeting.

**Assistance to Firefighters Grant**  
Jones said that almost all the Assistance to Firefighters Grant funds requested by Battalion Chiefs Sean Pearson and Shannon Balvanz will be received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for a total of \$47,619, and the district will be about 80% of the way toward purchasing all 10 of the new radios approved

DWFPD (Cont. on 20)



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