

Monument Fire District, May 24

Board director positions change; contractor hiring flexibility approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on May 24, the board held an election to determine board positions; approved a resolution to allow flexibility in selecting contractors for the remodeling of Stations 2, 4, and 5; received multiple updates; and was introduced to the fire technician.

Directors Randall Estes, Tom Tharnish, and Mike Smaldino attended remotely.

Board of Directors' position election

Kovacs said the directors can self-nominate or be nominated by the board, and if more than one director is interested in a position, a secret vote would be taken.

President John Hildebrandt self-nominated himself as board president and said he would like to continue as president until at least the consolidation process with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District is complete. He, Roger Lance, and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board President Mark Gunderman started the process on Jan. 9, 2021, when they saw an opportunity to make a merger work. See www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#tlmfpd and [#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwfpd).

Director Jason Buckingham nominated Secretary Smaldino for board president.

Smaldino accepted the nomination and said he agreed with everything Hildebrandt said, but he was in position to commit more to the board compared with even two months ago. After nine years serving on the board it feels like a natural step, he said, and he would like the opportunity to lead the district in the same direction it has been going.

Smaldino was elected board president in a 4-3 secret paper/text vote.

Hildebrandt congratulated Smaldino on his new board position.

Smaldino thanked the board and Hildebrandt for everything he had done for the district and said he wanted to use his skill sets to get over some of the hurdles ahead.

Vice President Roger Lance declined to run again for his position, and Hildebrandt accepted Buckingham's nomination for vice president. Treasurer Tom Kelly elected to retain his position, and Buckingham self-nominated himself as secretary. The Board of Directors are: President Mike Smaldino, Vice President John Hildebrandt, Treasurer Tom Kelly, Secretary Jason Buckingham, and Directors Randy Estes, Roger Lance, and Tom Tharnish.

Contractor hiring flexibility

Hildebrandt requested the board consider Resolution 2023-03, a resolution for integrated project delivery for the remodel of Stations 2, 4, and 5. The resolution allows the district to reject lower bids should the final product be optimal with another contractor. The resolution would not isolate the district into accepting the minimum bid from a construction company, he said.

Kovacs said the resolution allows the district to hire contractors that are considered the most capable of performing the project, contractors that choose the best product and have the most experience. It allows flexibility as the district begins remodeling the three stations. As each bid is received, the district will present it to the board, he said.

Lance said the lowest bidder usually turns out to be higher with all the additions and change orders.

The board unanimously approved the resolution.

Station 1 training center update

Kovacs said the district had requested cost estimates from the architects for the initial phase of the Station 1 training center design process. The architects will provide a rough estimate of initial costs to help budget for 2024. The district is planning a phased approach, with prioritization for the props. The cost of materials could be considerably higher in 2023, he said.

Buckingham asked if all the grading and flat work would be laid out as part of the initial phase, and then add structures, or just approach the property in chunks. Once the earth is moved it makes sense to add utilities before adding structures, he said.

Kovacs said the first phase would include earth work, a retention pond, the installation of utilities and a form of a training tower out of Conex containers. Classrooms are a priority, and a warehouse to store equipment, apparatus, and include a workshop for repairs. Phase 2 would include technical rescue, various firefighter training props, and a vehicle extrication area, he said.

Financial report

Kelly said as of April 30, the district is 33.3% of the way through the predicted budget for 2023, and all revenue is tracking as expected, except for impact fees that are deficient by about 20% with about \$24,000 received year to date. The projected revenue for impact fees is about \$200,000. Overall revenue received year to date is about \$7.1 million. The projected annual revenue is about \$16.5 million. Expenses for administration and building were slightly over but are coming back into line with budget projections. The largest expense is for general liabilities and benefits, which were higher than expected due to the 2023 budget passing before receiving the actual amounts due for 2023. The increases were due to accident and health insurance for the additional firefighters on the payroll, some additional IT expenses, vehicles, and rebranding. Overall year to date, expenses were about \$4.9 million, or about 34.9% of the projected expense budget of about \$14 million.

Kelly also noted the Fleet Capital Fund dropped from about \$1.6 million to \$845,966 after the 2018 and the 2019 Pierce fire engines were paid off for a total of about \$825,000.

Kovacs said the district is carrying about \$1.6 million in debt for the new tower ladder truck that is expected in 2024, and about \$800,000 for the Pierce Type 1 Engine 514 placed into service at Station 4, and the administrative offices. The district hopes for increased revenue next year to begin paying off the debt before a new Station 3 is built (administration offices are included in the design), he said.

The board accepted the financial report as presented.

Fire technician introduction

Kovacs said that during the budget process for 2023, the district requested a fire technician position be added to alleviate some time-consuming clerical responsibilities the shift battalion chiefs and administrative staff were performing. He introduced the first district Fire Technician Carlos Amaya and said he was an outstanding applicant and has remained busy every day since starting in the position in mid-May.

Amaya said his ultimate goal is to become a firefighter and he is looking forward to learning more about the fire service. He is focused on becoming an asset to the district, helping out in any way he can, he said.

The board welcomed Amaya to the district.

Chief's report

Kovacs updated the board as follows:

- The district is hosting a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) from June 12-16. Development of the event within the district was a recommendation in the 2019 Master Plan by Emergency Services Consulting International. See BFFRPD article on page 14.
- Battalion Chief Sean Pearson and EMS Coordinator Stephanie Soll have developed a regional plan for a county-wide MCI that involves the Office of Emergency Management, multiple agencies, and Centura and UC Health hospitals. He is proud of their achievements.
- The district completed 813 hours of training in April, and he thanked Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) for hosting the Live Fire Training days in April.
- The district is working on a proposal for a multi-agency training consortium with Colorado Springs Fire Department and BFFRPD.
- The retirement ceremony for retired Battalion Chief Mike Keough was a great success. Keough is attending a Police Training Academy and will continue to serve the district as a peace officer with the Monument Police Department. See a photo of the ceremony on page 27.
- A retirement ceremony will be held at Station 1, on June 28 at 8 a.m. for Battalion Chief Mike Dooley.
- With Dooley's retirement, the district hired Jarred Picker; a licensed Firefighter/Paramedic previously employed at Larkspur Fire Protection District. Picker will attend the West Metro Academy in August.
- Two deserving students from Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High Schools were each awarded \$1,500 scholarships from the International Firefighter Association Local 4319.

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