

- RVs can have temporary electrical connections, but not water or wastewater connections.
- Using Code Enforcement to address violations of policy.

The board generally did not support:

- Specifying where an RV must be stored on private property.
- Requiring RVs on private property be covered or screened.
- Using RVs to camp on public property.
- Using private property to store RVs as a commercial enterprise.

The board did not take a position on use of generators with RVs on private property.

### Audit of 2022 budget shows good financial health

David Green, of Green and Associates, the town's independent auditing company, presented the results of his audit of the town's 2022 financial statements. His report gave the town an unmodified "clean" opinion, indicating the statements are in line with generally accepted accounting principles and provide an accurate picture of the town's finances for 2022. He performed a risk-based audit designed to identify and address risks.

He reported some checks that were erroneously duplicated, but noted they were only paid once. He complimented the town staff for their cooperation with his work.

He said the town's net position, a statement of what the town owns and owes, was \$4 million, with \$2.6 million in the General Fund and the rest in the Enterprise Water Fund. The town's assets are mainly property tax receivables, Green said. He noted funds from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) that have been received but not yet spent. Those funds are tracked, and the remainder is known, he said.

Green pointed out the Water Fund is its own enterprise, has its own financial statements and has its own opinion in his report.

Mosely asked Green to comment on the fact that \$800,000 was budgeted for Capital and Operations and Maintenance but only \$194,000 was spent. Mosely asked if that was reasonable. Green replied every budget should be as accurate as possible, but revenues and expenditures have to be estimated and it's "easy enough" for some funds to be unspent. State law requires towns not to exceed their published budget, but spending less than what is budgeted doesn't mean the budget should be adjusted down.

In response to a question from Havenar about why amounts don't always match the budget on a month-to-month basis, Green pointed out that there can be a lag when invoices are presented. Accounting uses hindsight, he explained, and sometimes things are not reconciled until an audit is performed and charges made to incorrect accounts are adjusted. It was common to adjust accounting entries throughout the year, he said. Collins pointed out the accounting codes the town uses have changed over time and it wasn't until 2021 that the town began to budget for capital items. Havenar said uncertainty about ex-

penses and revenues sometimes required the town to budget high.

Green said he has seen constant improvement in the town's financial processes in the eight years he has served as the town's auditor. "It seems to get smoother every year," he said.

Padgett asked if the Water Fund was under budget and Green answered expenses were \$889,699 under budget and revenues were \$245,435 less than expected.

Later in the meeting, the board voted in favor of Resolution 48-2023, which authorizes staff to file the 2022 audit report with the state.

At the July 27 meeting, in her administrative report, in response to comments that the town had misused ARPA funds, Collins affirmed with the board that the 2022 audit included a review of the town's use of ARPA funds, with a positive result. She mentioned that when the town received the ARPA funds a call was held with the state, who agreed that water lines and a well were appropriate uses of the funds. There was no misuse of ARPA funds, Collins said.

### Public hearings

At the July 27 meeting, the board held two public hearings, both of which led to votes later in the meeting.

The first public hearing concerned a minor subdivision request from Scott Phillips, who requested to subdivide his five-acre lot on Rockridge Road into three lots: a 2.5-acre lot for his home, a 1.4-acre lot and a 1.3-acre lot. The second and third lot would be developed later, he said. Phillips told the board the Planning Commission had unanimously supported his request.

There were no comments from the public on Phillips' request, and the board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 49-2203 approving his request.

The second public hearing was more contentious. Sylvia Amons requested a conditional use permit allowing her to develop her property at 56 Highway 105 as a mixed-use commercial and residential project. Amons said she had begun planning the project in 2018, but the town's moratorium on water and sewer taps stalled it. She was also delayed by issues of the proposed building's height and the number of floors. Amons said she wanted to develop the property as a three-story building within the town's current height limitation, with commercial space on the bottom floor and two floors of residential units.

Collins said the Planning Commission decided the project complied with the master plan and would add needed housing to the town. Havenar pointed out that Amons' plan was approved in 2018, with a height of 32 feet and two stories. Havenar also said the question before the board was not the design of the building but only the question of whether the property could be developed for mixed use. The property was currently zoned for commercial use, Havenar said. The plan would be considered later in the process.

Several residents spoke against the project, citing concerns with access to the lot, impact on traffic, the density, the proximity to other homes, the impact on neighbors' views of Ben Lomond, location of trash

receptacles, inadequate parking, lowering of property values, and turnover in the residential units.

Havenar and Krob pointed out, again, that the issue before the board was only whether to allow mixed residential and commercial use, and not the design of the building.

Ball pointed out that citizens wanted to see a mix of commercial and residential on the town's main street. The state Legislature is pushing for more affordable housing, she said, adding Amons' project addressed those concerns.

Havenar said a 30-foot-tall commercial building might be less to the neighbors liking than Amons' project. The Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment would work through all the design details later, she said.

The hearing was closed, and the board voted to approve Resolution 50-2023, granting Amons her conditional use permit for a mixed-use project, with Dreher voting no, Ball, Farr, Padgett, Stern and Havenar voting yes. Ehrhardt was excused from the meeting and did not vote.

### Other votes

- The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 47-2023, which renews a cooperative agreement between the Palmer Lake Police Department and El Paso County allowing the town to rely on the county when doing investigations involving child abuse and neglect.
- The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 51-2023, which updates the high priority task list in the Preliminary Engineering Report that addresses the town's water system maintenance needs.
- The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 53-2023, which revises an intergovernmental agreement between the town and the Monument Fire Department regarding ambulance service and medical transport to allow an annual fee rather than per-call fees, making it easier for the town to budget for the service.
- A special permit was granted to Verity's Village to hold a fundraiser in the form of a running event at the lake on Sept. 16.

### Focus on the Forest honored

Jimmy Zelones, Tyson Reese, and Shawn Nielson of Focus on the Forest were presented with certificates of appreciation for their work removing graffiti from the reservoir trail. For more information, see <https://focusontheforest.org>.

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The next board meetings are scheduled for Aug. 10 and 24. See the town's website at [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com) to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

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## Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, July 26

# Election called to dissolve subdistrict and complete merger

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting on July 26, the board approved a resolution calling for a coordinated election on Nov. 7, approved a joint resolution of advocacy, a joint factual summary for the election process, and approved funds for the district and subdistrict elections with assistance from Special District Solutions. The district also approved the 2022 audit.

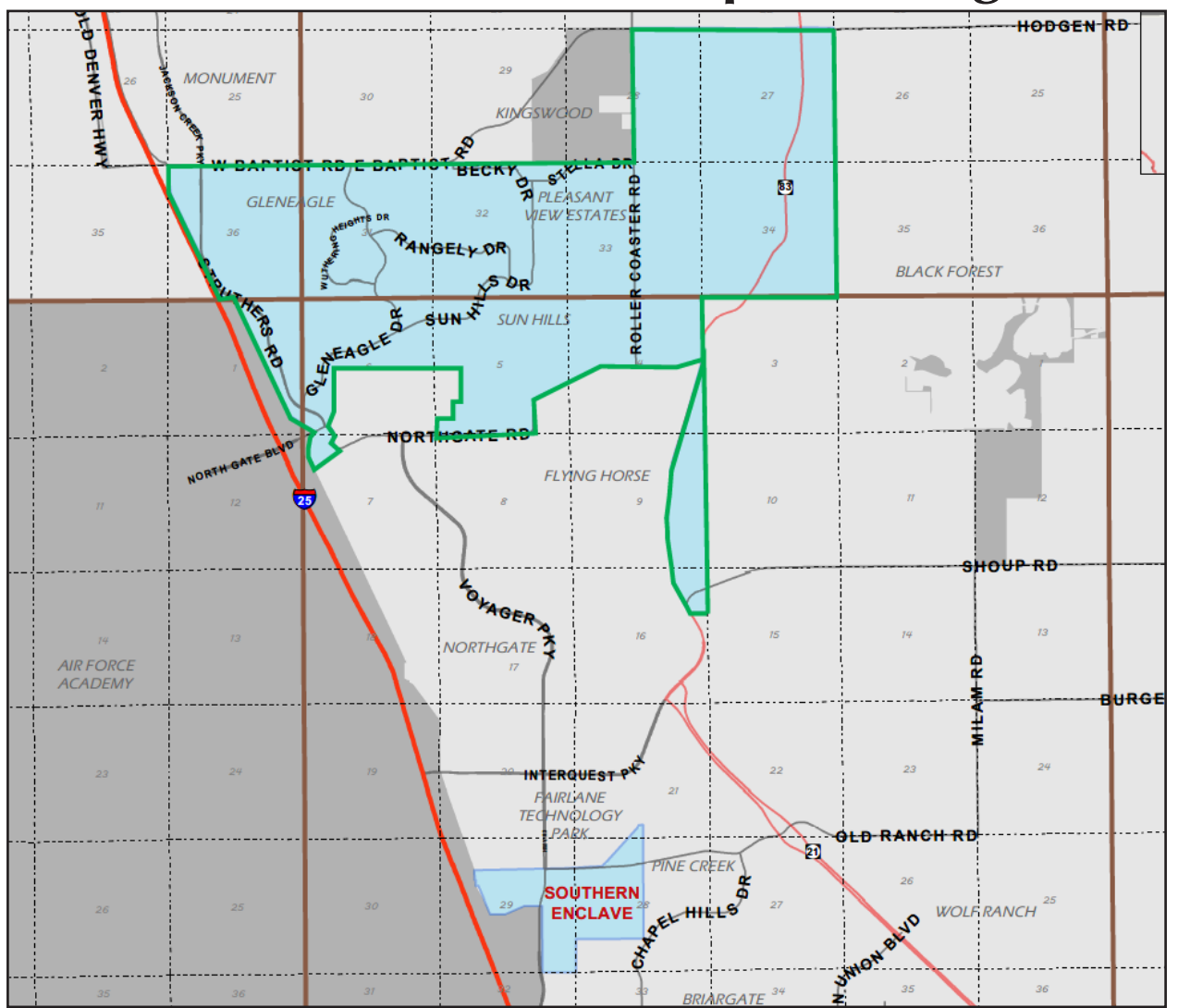
Treasurer Duane Garrett attended via Zoom and Secretary Larry Schwarz joined the meeting in person at 4:40 p.m.

Director Charles Fleece was presumed travelling and was excused.

### Election called to complete merger

Background: In 2016, the City of Colorado Springs took about one-half of the district's territory, prompting the creation of the northern subdistrict over most of the district area that was left, to make sure there was enough revenue to continue providing services. Since then, the district's jurisdiction and the northern subdistrict's jurisdiction have been almost identical. Only one small enclave of property remains inside the fire district, known locally as the "Montezuma area" or the "Southern Enclave." See map.

On Dec. 8, 2021 after about 11 months of negotiations and to better serve the community, the district entered into an operational and administration intergovernmental agreement with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District (MFD). At the beginning of January 2022, without warning American Medical Response abruptly withdrew ambulance service from former Station 1 (Gleneagle Drive), six months earlier than anticipated. Due to the agreement to begin unifying the districts,



Above: Map of the Donald Wescott Fire District showing the "Southern Enclave." Map courtesy DWFPD.

MFD was able to provide immediate EMS service to the DWFPD. See [www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwfpd) and #mfd.

Since then, district staff have been transferred to the MFD payroll, blended into a five station service area staffed only by professional firefighters, and the firefighters now have new apparatus and ambulances, compatible self-contained breathing apparatus and radios, and wear the same uniforms in a combined district. Stations 4 and 5 (formerly Stations 1 and 2) have been transformed to accommodate additional staff. The Station 4 leaking roof was repaired and rooftop HVAC unit replaced, and the broken bay door fixed. The water heaters were replaced at both stations. The remodel plans for both stations are al-

most finalized, and both will be completed ahead of the remodel of Station 2 on Roller Coaster Road. The transfer of stations, apparatus, and equipment was approved by the Board of Directors and legally transferred to MFD on Oct. 18, 2022. See [www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwfpd).

The district's attorney, Emily Powell, said a court hearing requesting an order of election took place on June 23. The subdistrict will seek dissolution only if the fire district (Southern Enclave) seeks to increase its mill levy to offset the revenue that will be lost. If only the subdistrict is dissolved, the loss of 14.9 mills would be devastating to the district's ability to operate. All of the steps and actions the district has taken so far were court approved and now it is time to ask

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