

with Pikes Peak State College (PPSC), and their Fire Academy Cadre interviewed five self-paying students to make up the numbers of the Career Fire Academy.

- Two students were accepted by PPSC to complete a full academy of about 16 to 18 students, with nine from the district and four or five students from BFFRPD. See www.ocn.me/v23n12.htm#tmd.
- Lt. Steve Buckner will be the district's new training officer and assist at the academy that is set to begin on Jan. 15.
- The district has been invited to assist with the fire science program for PPSC, and the goal is for the combined Career Fire Academy to become the El Paso County Fire Academy.

Fire academies are expensive to run, but PPSC is bearing much of the cost and it will be a cost-

effective project for the district. The district is aiming high, and we will see what happens, said Bradley.

Smaldino said it will be neat to see, and he hopes other districts will watch, jump in and send recruits.

Chief's report

Kovacs apologized for being unable to attend the meeting and thanked the board for its support throughout the year and said Lt. Curt Leonhardt had accepted the logistics position. The Wildland Fire (Type 3) engine ordered in 2021 was expected to be delivered to Front Range Apparatus mid-December, then delivered to the district before Dec. 25. It is a Christmas miracle, he said. Note: The chief's report for November will include December activity and was not available for the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Dec. 28

Exclusion process progressing; 2024 budget approved

By Janet Sellers

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Dec. 28, the board approved the exclusion process for 952 properties, approved a revised 2024 budget, and four probationary firefighters were sworn into the district, with families pinning on the badges. The district also announced a new volunteer, search-and-rescue dog Koda.

All five board directors were present.

Dual service area discussed

A discussion addressed budgeting issues related to the loss of property tax revenue that will occur when Colorado Springs residents in a dual service area, are excluded from the district. The residents in the dual service area (near Woodmen Road) are subject to dual taxation by the City of Colorado Springs and BFFRPD, but will be assessed fire and emergency services taxes only by the city when excluded from the district.

Background: Until August 2013, the properties in the exclusion areas received fire and emergency services from BFFRPD, and those residents were assessed taxes for fire and emergency services by the district. In August 2013, Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) opened a fire station to provide services in the dual service area and those residents then became subject to dual taxation. About 2,200 homes were subject to dual taxation when the board requested the exclusion process begin in 2018. The process has been slow and only about 700 homes have been excluded to date. See www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#bffrpd and www.ocn.me/21n10.htm#bffrpdandwww.ocn.me/v22n2.htm#bffrpd.

The board unanimously approved a resolution for the City of Colorado Springs to take ac-

tion to exclude 952 addresses from the BFFRPD area of responsibility. The property addresses will be checked for accuracy. The property exclusion is still under consideration.

Homeowners petition for inclusion

The board unanimously approved 12 homeowner petitions for property inclusion into the BFFRPD service area.

Financial report

The directors discussed financial information, and Treasurer Jack Hinton reported \$1.89 million in the bank with no funds from property taxes received in November. BFFRPD has \$2.655 million in total assets with expenditures at 89% of the total budget. The financial report was accepted.

Repairs needed

The concrete floor for the training program has been finished, and repairs to the bay doors regarding the motors and heaviness of the doors due to the glass included are out for bids.

Department updates

The district has hired three people to attend the January 2024 Career Fire Academy. Fire training in 2023 included structure training with Falcon Fire District, heavy vehicle extrication training with Monument and Falcon fire districts, and live fire training with CSFD. The new tender that is being built will be inspected by Gavin Smith, fleet manager, in the first week of January.

2024 budget revised

A revised 2024 budget with wage and leave schedules, was unanimously adopted. The budget was originally built on a premise that proposition HH would pass. Since it failed, the budget needed revisions which included a 4.7% cost of

Correction

The December edition of OCN should have stated Firefighter Wyatt Benoit left the district on Nov. 26 and joined CSFD. As stated in the October chief's report, Lt. Chris Keough resigned from the district in October. OCN regrets the error.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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living adjustment. However, this is not enough to remain competitive with other departments. The district will increase the operations staff from eight to 10 people with an unexpected increase of 8.75% in health insurance.

BFFRPD intends to close 2024 debt-free. The total revenues proposed for 2024 are about \$7 million, to include a \$373,301 reimbursement from the state under the SB23B-001.

Investment strategies discussed

A discussion was led by Hinton concerning the need for revamped financial policies and procedures that should be available to all department members and the public. These procedures would also cover investment strategies. Considerations for optimizing investment strategies were discussed. The changes incorporated into a document will be reviewed by the attorney for the fire district before being adopted, and this may need a work session. The subject was tabled until the January meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

The January 2024 meeting was changed from Jan. 10 to Jan. 17. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Director of Public Relations Brooke Reid at Admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

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Natalie Barszcz also contributed to this article.

Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines 1, 2, and 3, Dec. 4 and 13

District participates in Northern Delivery System; rates increase for 2024; budgets approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) and Pinon Pines Metropolitan District (PPMD) 2 and 3 meeting on Dec. 4, the board approved participation in the Northern Delivery System (NDS), approved the 2024 budgets and mill levies subject to receiving the Jan. 3 revised property tax assessment, and approved rate increases and an updated contract for services with Triview Metropolitan District (TMD). The board received budget-related updates on the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI) pipeline project and the Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority/Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) Indirect Potable Reuse Study.

A town hall meeting preceded the regular board meetings via teleconference at 3 p.m. District Manager Ann Nichols confirmed that no residents attended the six-minute meeting to receive updates on the FLMD public infrastructure project status, and the PPMD 1 and 2 outstanding debt and financial statement reviews. The PPMD 1 all-resident board members did not attend any of the scheduled meetings on Dec. 4. A rescheduled special meeting was held on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 4 p.m. At the PPMD 1 special meeting, the board approved a reduction in the debt service mill levy for PPMD 1, adopted the 2024 budget, certified the mill levy (pending the Jan. 3 revised property tax assessments), and approved the annual administrative and board member election resolutions.

Note: The meetings were held via teleconference.

FLMD and PPMD 2 and 3

Treasurer/Assistant Secretary Douglas Stimple, chief executive officer of Classic Homes, was excused.

Northern Delivery System participation agreement

District Attorney Russell Dykstra of Spencer Fane

LLP requested the board approve a proposal for the district to buy into the capacity of the NDS.

Nichols said:

- The district proposes a participation agreement in the NDS to connect the district to the CSU water storage tank (Highway 83) and deliver return flows back to the district.
- TMD upfronted the cost of the NDS that is awaiting completion of the pump station at the Highway 83 tank before water can be delivered. See www.ocn.me/v23n12.htm#tmd.
- The district will own 3.7% of the total share capacity of the pipeline.
- CSU will charge a convey, treat and deliver fee annually to TMD for 25 years. The district will pay 3.7% of the total annual cost billed to TMD (subject to CSU rate increases).
- The delivery fee will also increase incrementally for FLMD if TMD needs to increase the meter size in the future.
- The district budgeted \$200,000 in 2023 and \$800,000 in 2024 (split into five payments of about \$199,506).

Tom Blunk of CP Real Estate Capital, representing Forest Lakes LLC and Forest Lakes Residential Development, said it was important to protect water rights with TMD and complete the loop for the district.

Nichols said even though the district is not quite ready to exercise control of its return flows, the water supply including surface water is virtually all 100% reusable to extinction, and all the first use water supplied to customers can be recaptured and legally reused. It is essential in this environment to retain water rights and get the water back to the district when needed, and the TMD agreement will allow this to happen (via an existing interconnect) when the Beaver Creek flows into Bristlecone Lake are not very high, she

said.

The board approved the NDS Participation Agreement with TMD, 4-0.

Future water reuse possibilities

Nichols said the district is considering moving its wastewater treatment to CSU in the future through the NMCI pipeline. The NMCI pipeline project request for proposal design is in process, and CSU is close to choosing a consultant. The NMCI will move ahead only if after 30% of the design phase reveals the pipeline is the most efficient way to provide service to customers, instead of making the costly regulatory requirements to the Upper Monument Creek Waste Water Regional Treatment Facility. The 2024 budget includes \$90,000 for the district's share of the design cost. The Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority/Colorado Springs Utilities Indirect Potable Reuse Study would cost about \$350,000, and a grant for \$250,000 had been requested from the Colorado Water Authority. If the grant is successful, the remaining cost of \$100,000 will be split between the participants, she said.

Rates increase for 2024

Dykstra said the district had not received any public comments before the meeting. He opened a public hearing for the proposed 2024 rate increases for water, wastewater, and landscape services for FLMD and noted the increases had been published over 30 days in advance and posted appropriately on the FLMD website from Oct. 11, 2023.

Nichols recommended the board approve the proposed 7% increase in water and wastewater service rates, with no change in development fees, and a \$1 increase for the irrigation/landscaping monthly fee. The increase is necessary to get the rates up to a level that will sustain opera-

FOREST LAKES (Cont. on 14)