

Planning Commission members appointed

The board voted at the July 28 meeting to re-appoint six members to the Planning Commission: David Cooper, Vic

Brown, Mark Bruce, Bill Fisher, Kory De Angelo, and Ken Dickinson. The board also appointed Trustee Havenar to the Planning Commission for the first time.

The two meetings for August will be at 6:30 p.m. on Aug.

11 and Aug. 25 at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors, July 19
District gets "clean" audit report

By Kate Pangelinan

A short public Board of Directors meeting was held for the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District on July 19, primarily featuring budgetary discussions. This was followed by an executive session. Director Harland Baker and Assistant Chief Scott Ridings were both absent.

Administrative

A few months ago, the Donald Wescott Fire District contracted with an auditor to review its operations. However, as Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich explained to the board, the auditor did not expect to find such detail in the district's pension report, and therefore wanted more than anticipated for their services. For this reason, the audit payments went \$400 over the allotted budget to obtain financial information on staff pensions for compliance with the new nationwide General Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 68, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions. .

The auditor also gave the fire district a "clean bill of health," according to Popovich's Open Session Summary of the board's June 21 meeting. Upon reviewing this summary, Director John Fredell recommended changing the language to read, "See attached audit report." His hope is to avoid "substituting our (the fire district's) words" for the auditor's.

In other budgetary news, while the fire district still has

money in its payroll fund, a little more has been spent than Popovich likes for "this time of the year." This is because a number of part-time employees have picked up hours to compensate for lack of some regular staff. The fire district isn't in the habit of hiring new firefighters before current firefighters leave, which can lead to some gap periods.

Chief's report

Assistant Chief Ridings was absent from this meeting, but Chief Vinny Burns noted that he had just returned that afternoon, July 19, from two weeks on deployment fighting fires in other parts of Colorado. First, Wescott recruits helped fight the fire in Boulder County for three or four days. Then they returned to Monument for a day or two before going to help with the Hayden Pass fire west of Canon City. Burns predicted that this might prove to be "a busy season." He also applauded firefighters for nearly completing the fire station's new paintjob.

Executive session

The executive session's discussion topic was: "24-6-424E – Determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations and instructing negotiations." The public cannot be present for executive sessions, but Popovich advised OCN after the meeting that the board voted unanimously in favor of supporting "these settlement principles ... Based upon the interpretation that Wescott retains 100 percent

of the mill levy generated from ... the Northgate Exclusion Area in 2017, half of the Northgate Exclusion Area in 2018, and half of the amount of the Northgate Exclusion Area in 2019."

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors' next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Aug. 16 at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Please call 488-8680, a non-emergency number, for more information, or visit www.wescottfire.org. The district is also on Facebook.

Kate Pangelinan can be reached at katepangelinan@ocn.me.

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, July 27

Leadership development study begun

By Lisa Hatfield

The July 27 Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District meeting introduced a teambuilding study for the district, a grant from the Tri-Lakes Women's Club, and comments about the conditions of the district's fire stations and how various pieces of upcoming legislation might affect the district.

Secretary Mike Smaldino and Director Jason Buckingham were excused.

Leadership development

Fire Chief Chris Truty introduced two volunteers from Peak Leadership, Dr. John Anderson and Robert Ginnett, who are both past professors in the U.S. Air Force Academy Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership. They have already begun conducting confidential interviews with all 42 members of the district as part of a leadership development study requested by Truty.

Ginnett said previous entities they have worked with include NASA astronauts, surgical teams, Navy SEALs, commercial airlines, and police forces. "Even with overly qualified individuals, they do not always work well as a team," he said. Anderson said over the next year or more, they will identify the strengths of the individuals and then develop recommendations for training initiatives and more effective teamwork in the organization.

Truty later told OCN they are doing the work pro bono, "a stunning deal for us."

Women's club grant appreciated

Battalion Chief Mike Dooley said, "Thanks to the Tri-Lakes Women's Club for keeping us safe!" The club donated \$2,500 to the district's safety committee, making it

possible to purchase new traffic safety vests with built-in LED lights. The new vests will be much more visible than the reflective vests the district already had, which met federal standards but were still hard to see.

Station tour feedback

Comments regarding the tour of all three stations plus Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) Station 22 on June 22 included a call from Vice President Roger Lance for a long-term plan to improve the stations and improve the quality of the living environment for the district's employees.

Chief's report

Highlights from the chief's report from Truty and Deputy Chief Randy Trost included:

- The second new ambulance, the new brush truck and the new battalion vehicle have all been delivered.
- The other vehicles are "being nursed along" and are becoming expensive, Trost said.
- Trost sent out four conditional offers of employment

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