

a single point, in UMCRRWTF. Since Forest Lakes Metro District will be using mostly Bristlecone reservoir surface water from its surface water treatment plant, this is less of an issue for them. Donala operators are operating the Forest Lakes water and wastewater systems on a contract ba-

sis. Petersen added that he will ask Yocam to provide an estimated cost to expand the UMCRRWTF concrete dump pad, for air drying solid wastes to ease JETVAC truck removal, at the same time they are pouring concrete for the secondary road repair

noted above.

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

The next board meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Sept. 21 in the district conference room at 15850 Holbein Drive. Information: 488-3603 or www.donalawater.

org. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month.

Jim Kendrick can be reached at jimkendrick@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors, Aug. 16

Negotiations with Colorado Springs continue

By Kate Pangelinan

All board members were present at the Aug. 16 Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors meeting, which primar-

ily dealt with budgetary explanations until they came to discuss “new business” and attending district constituents posed questions. These questions prompted Chief

Vinny Burns to explain that it is too early to release Wescott’s reaction and plans for funding following more of their territory being annexed by Colorado Springs, given that planning is still underway. There are no solid reactions to release yet, as the situation is still fluid.

New business

Members of the community—Gary Rusnak, Dennis Feltz, and Bill Lowes—asked for more information about the conclusion of Wescott’s executive session at the July 19 meeting, where after the executive session, 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.”

These citizens hoped for clarification, as well as information, about alternative budget scenarios when the district stops receiving the current court-ordered level of tax revenue from the Northgate exclusion area.

Burns answered that while the district’s attorney has met with an attorney from the city attorney’s office to determine the city’s position, there has been no specific progress he can report on regarding Wescott’s “organized withdrawal” from areas annexed by Colorado Springs. Board members were hesitant to speculate about future plans without knowing what settlement might be reached about city tax revenue allocation to Wescott.

Lowes, a former Wescott board president, asked the board to determine if there are any costs that can be avoided through the rest of 2016 and if there are any early payoffs of debt that can occur, in the event that all city exclusionary area tax revenues cease at the end of this year. Lowes also asked the board to publicize these “2016 austerity program decisions” to proactively minimize the impact of this loss of revenue, particularly with pending email replies to all the in-district homeowner associations already asking for this information.

At the June 21 meeting, the consensus of the directors was to wait until summer

2017 to decide whether or not to put a mill levy override (MLO) vote on the ballot.

Administrative

Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich reported that the fire district’s 2016 overtime expenses are still running over budget, 100 percent already expended through July 31, as turnover has been higher than expected and some employees who left recently have not yet been replaced. As of July 31, 96 percent of property taxes have been received and the reported year-to-date financial totals were:

- People’s National Bank—\$11,124
- Peak fund—\$593,951
- Wells Fargo public trust fund—\$1,044,707
- Net district balance—up \$337,314

Chief’s report

Assistant Chief Scott Ridings reported that the fire district responded to 793 calls throughout May-July of 2015, as compared to the 671 calls in 2016, resulting in a 15 percent decrease. Ninety percent of this 122-call reduction is due to fewer Wescott subcontracted AMR ambulance responses to calls in Colorado Springs, all outside of Wescott’s service area and the Northgate exclusion area. Ridings added that when the AMR ambulance is in quarters at the Wescott station when a fire call is received, the Wescott firefighter EMT in the ambulance can “become the third person on the ladder truck.” There was a discussion about no longer tracking and publicly reporting AMR ambulance runs in and out of district during board meetings.

There have been three building fires this summer, two within Wescott’s district and one for which they provided mutual aid. Fire loss totaled \$60,000.

Also, efforts to “clean up” the fire station continue, now with plans to put in a new carpet.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors’ next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Sept. 20 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.

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Aug. 24

Chief Truty addresses staffing concerns

By Lisa Hatfield

At the Aug. 24 Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) Board meeting, the directors discussed concerns about the hiring process used by the district, which is a bottleneck because of the extended time and money needed to hire and train a new firefighter or paramedic. They also approved a new impact fee schedule and accepted the 2015 audit.

Secretary Mike Smaldino was excused.

Hiring process concerns discussed

President Jake Shirk said that the board was concerned about the difficulty of hiring new qualified employees and maintaining personnel staffing. Because three employees have quit since January, overtime pay is already at 99 percent for the year, although there are still five months left in the budget, he said.

Background: On May 25, the board had voted to approve a paramedic wage sched-