

to in the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) signed with the City of Colorado Springs after the city “gobbled up” more of Wescott’s territory, as Chief Vinny Burns called it.

After the meeting, Executive Administrator Stacy Popovich verified for OCN that the IGA has been signed by both parties and is currently is scheduled to be finalized in December.

The IGA between DWFPD and the city covers the exclusion of the portion of the DWFPD service area now annexed into the city from Interquest Parkway north to Northgate Boulevard. The overall effect will be to reduce the size of the district’s service area by half of its current 22 square miles and reduce its total revenue by 66 percent beginning in 2019 under the current district property tax of 7.0 mills.

Background: This change was caused by the Colorado Springs Fire Department’s (CSFD) recent opening of CSFD Fire Station 22, 13 years after the city’s annexation of the affected properties. DWFPD (previously named El Paso County Volunteer Fire Department 1) has provided fire service to this area for over 40 years. A court decision allowed DWFPD to continue collecting full property taxes from the city’s annexed area due to the city not providing local fire service. The city did not give a discount or refund to the annexed property owners for not providing a staffed local CSFD fire station.

In 2017, exclusion of annexed city property from Interquest Parkway north to the proposed location of the Powers Boulevard extension with I-25 will occur, but DWFPD will still receive 100 percent of previously projected revenue that was generated in 2016 by DWFPD property taxes in that area of the city, because these property taxes are distributed by El Paso County the year after they are collected.

In 2018, the exclusion of the current southern dual-taxed DWFPD service from the planned Powers Boulevard right-of-way north to Northgate Boulevard will occur, and the district’s overall property tax revenue received will be about 33 percent lower than in 2017.

In 2019 and onward, DWFPD will neither earn nor receive any revenue at all from any of the de-included territory south of Northgate Road, and so its overall property tax revenue received will be about 66 percent (or about \$1.5 million) lower than about \$2.2 million received in 2017.

Wescott’s remaining land area in 2019 will include its current territory north of Northgate Boulevard plus two unannexed county areas straddling Voyager Parkway between Old Ranch Road and The Classical Academy.

The district plans to put a mill levy increase measure on the ballot in 2017 asking district residents to help pay for whatever level of continued district services they want to receive. The measure might only be asked of district property owners within the smaller county sub-district “that was created so that we could avoid city influence on the vote on mill levy, and just ask you folks,” Burns said.

But even if that mill levy increase ballot question is successful, 2018 will be a very lean revenue year because the potentially increased mill levy would not be imposed until 2018 and not remitted to the district until 2019. Burns said he hopes the 2017 budget savings and other accumulated past reserve funds will allow them to keep operating in 2018 and early 2019. During this inter-

val, the staff will be working with only 34 percent of their current budget. If the mill levy increase is defeated in the 2017 election, the district will continue to have only 34 percent of its 2016 property tax revenue in both 2018 and thereafter.

The board’s consensus was that it would be vital to have good communication with the homeowners associations in the remaining county section of DWFPD to get public input on the creation of a viable mill levy measure for a 2017 election.

More questions came from the public about the date on the resolution approving the board’s decision to sign the IGA when it was finalized. Gent explained that it had been drafted for Sept. 20 but not signed until Sept. 27’s extra executive session, and the date on the signed document was not changed to reflect that delay.

Rusnak said he represented 400 constituents and wondered if there were any way to get notification of special meetings such as the one on Sept. 27. Popovich said notices were posted on the Station 1 board and on the website, but if anyone wanted to receive email notices, they could contact her.

2017’s reduced budget discussed

Chairman Greg Gent said the district has plans to cut \$322,000 from the 2017 budget to help in 2018, but previous Wescott board president and Gleneagle Civic Association representative Bill Lowes said, “That is not even close to what you need to cut. You better do some more checking.” Rusnak added, “You have to implement your reduction in service now, in order to spread that savings into next year and 2018 to prepare for 2019.”

By 2019, the district’s service area will be cut in half, but the district will still have three firefighter shifts and other needs that will not be cut in half. “That’s

why we need to know what is the bare minimum service level when we ask for a mill levy,” Gent said.

The draft budget included cuts to administration expenditures bringing it below 2015 levels, and cuts to firefighting operations bringing it back to 2015 levels.

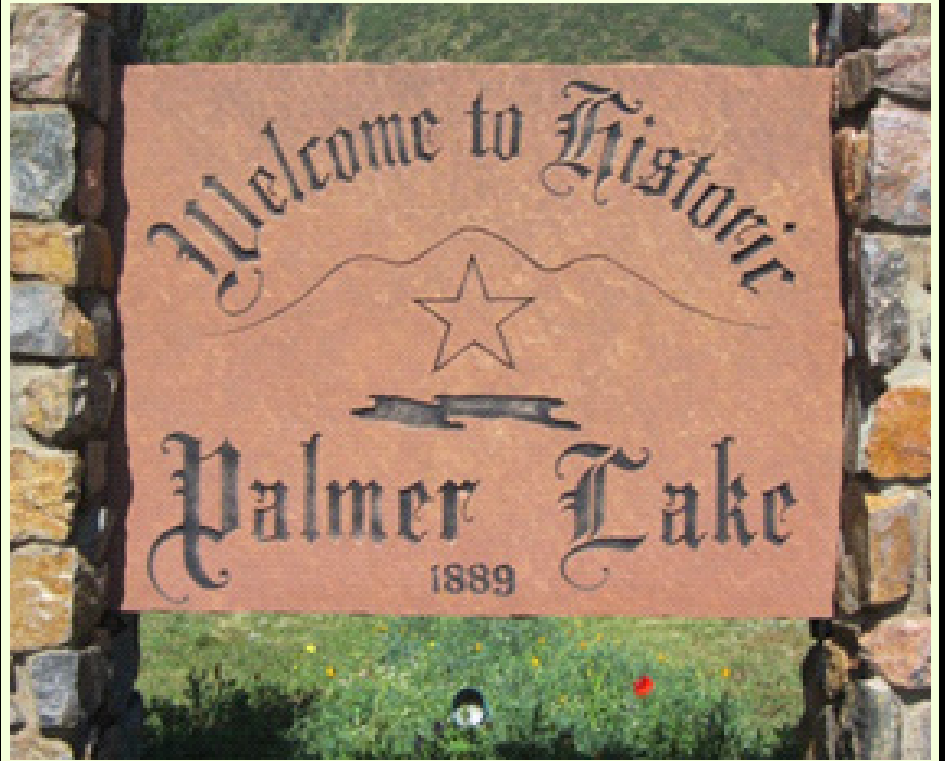
The biggest single cut suggested was to eliminate all overtime pay for 2017, so if firefighters call in sick or go on vacation and no volunteer firefighters can be found to fill a shift, that shift position will go unfilled, until the next two-day shift

reports for duty.

Burns said the only overtime that would be allowed would be for wildland deployments, since all the money for both the deployed firefighters and the ones paid overtime to backfill them would eventually be reimbursed through the federal government.

Director Bo McAllister said that as a resident of the district he was not comfortable with eliminating overtime completely. “I rose up through the rank of volunteers in this district, and sometimes

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