

lated TLMFPD article below.

Resident Russell Robinson thanked the board for their work and strongly encouraged them to pursue consolidation with TLMFPD. Robinson cited the external forces of budget and downsizing, as well as DWFPD's strategic location, as substantive reasons for seeking consolidation. Robinson referred to past political "hemming and hawing" and stated that it's time to move beyond it, especially since the district is reaching a critical size threshold.

At the close of the meeting, resident Bill Fillion expressed concern about the time limit for full-time operational staff to use additional vacation hours. He recommended that the time be flexible or floating to serve as a better incentive. Assistant Chief Scott Ridings replied that the extra vacation time is temporary.

Resident Dennis Feltz, a former Wescott board member, commented that the 2016 meeting summaries were not available on the website because the link did not function properly. Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich stated that she would research the situation.

Resident Jay Kelly asked if there was a strategic or master plan such as a merger with Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) or TLMFPD. Gent replied that the current focus is approving the mill levy increase in November because everything hinges on the mill levy decision. Gent added that DWFPD's relationship with BFFRPD changed significantly when the fire chief and board were fired after the Black Forest fire. Ridings stated that a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is planned. Financial stability by 2019 is the primary goal. Ridings added that merger opportunities will be considered but emphasized the district's desire to become more operationally efficient, to grow as a district, and to develop a training center. A merger doesn't necessarily translate to cost savings, he said.

Lois Williams expressed concern for the operational staff's morale because of the district's unpredictable future and apparent lack of planning. Director Harland Baker explained that, although the district has known of the impending changes since 2000, no specific timeline existed and the Colorado Springs Fire Department provided only a three-month notice prior to the annexation. Baker added that the board attempted a mill levy increase two years ago to prepare for the inevitable shrinkage of the district, but the levy was voted down. Baker noted that people were reluctant to support additional taxes when the funds were not immediately needed. Ridings commented that the district's leadership has communicated openly with the staff.

Seeking creative ways to support staff

The board unanimously approved Burns' proposal to increase vacation accrual for full-time operational staff to two additional 24-hour days in 2017 and 2018 to compensate for overtime restrictions due to the budget crunch. Because the additional "comp" days cannot be rolled or cashed out, the budget is not affected. "We have lost some good experienced people already," Director Bo McAllister commented.

Steering committee update

Burns reported that the final steering committee meeting was conducted on March 15, and mill levy recommendations from Pinnacle Consulting Group should be available by the April 18 board meeting. Resident and past board President Bill Lowes asked about the results of the straw poll. Ridings replied that the board is not ready to disclose that information yet. It is waiting for Pinnacle's recommendation and a complete staff report.

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, March 11 and 22

Mill levy citizens advisory task force begins work

By Lisa Hatfield

On March 11, the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) held a special meeting regarding impact fees. And on March 22, the board heard a detailed presentation, which the Citizens Advisory Task Force had also heard, outlining rough estimates for funding to maintain current service levels in the district.

The directors also learned how the imbalance of calls between TLMFPD and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) will be solved. And they heard about the need for citizens to represent their families, neighbors, and friends at the Neighborhood Wildfire Leadership Summit coming to the Tri-Lakes area on May 6, National FireWise Day.

Financial status

Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich presented the January and February bank balances and financials: Total cash for January was \$876,198, and for February \$782,295.

Popovich noted that insurance expenses were paid in a lump sum in the beginning of the year and although they are within the budget, expenses are slightly ahead. Resident Rusnak stated that he would submit additional questions about the current budget in writing.

Chief's report

Burns reported that a crew of firefighters had been deployed to Kansas and Oklahoma, and that all those costs would be reimbursed. DWFPD also sent a tender and a brush truck to provide mutual aid on a grassfire in south-east Colorado Springs.

Burns added that the fire danger is steadily increasing and the entire county is under a stage 1 fire ban. See <http://wescottfire.org/information/fire-danger/> for more information on fire restrictions.

Ridings compared the 215 emergency calls in February 2016 to the 229 emergency calls in February 2017, a 7 percent increase. Sixty-seven of the calls coded as Good Intent were dispatched and canceled en route. The incident report by type included:

- Fire—1,
- Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (No Fire)—0,
- Rescue and Emergency Medical Service Incident—136,
- Hazardous Condition (No Fire)—2,
- Service Call—15,
- Good Intent Call—71,
- False Alarm and False Call—4,
- Severe Weather and Natural Disaster—0
- Special Incident Type—0.

Additional approvals, acknowledgements and announcements:

- The board unanimously approved the February meeting summary. Popovich explained that meeting minutes are made public only when they have been approved by the board. The meeting packets provided to the public included the January minutes instead of the February minutes, which had just been approved.
- Burns announced that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) voted on March 21 to deny the Sun Hills Homeowners Association appeal and uphold the administrative determination. Burns clarified that DWFPD can now "do what we feel we need to do with the (Sun Hills Station 3) property." See BOCC article on page 21. Further discussion or action regarding Station 3 was tabled until after the mill levy.
- Director Bo McAllister praised Popovich for her excellent work in keeping the board informed and prepared.

The board adjourned at 7:57.

The next Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors meeting is scheduled to include a Volunteer Pension Board meeting and will begin at 6:30 p.m. April 18 at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Drive. Please call (719) 488-8680, a non-emergency number, for more information, or visit www.wescottfire.org. The district is also on Facebook.

Jennifer Kaylor can be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me.

CONCRETE WORK

*All types of concrete work
25 Years Experience • Insured
www.sharpestcut.com*

Sharpest Cut 719-491-4811



Cathedral Rock CHURCH

Worship | Connect | Impact

Sundays at 10:00 AM | Tri-Lakes YMCA
www.cathedralrockchurch.org

Jeff Freeman

- **Painting- Interior/ Exterior**
- **Cleaning- Commercial/ Janitorial**
- **Maintenance- Minor Handyman**

jcfreem@gmail.com

Cell: 719-460-4789

Starlight Home Care



Senior/Adult Daycare
600 El Paso Rd, Palmer Lake
Donna Mae Hanson
(719) 203-4606
(719) 332-3204

3,200 sq. ft. of main-level home atmosphere; elevator and wheel chair ramp; music room with piano, keyboard, and guitar; TV room with fireplace; quiet reading room; physical therapy/exercise room; craft area; large outdoor covered deck and gardens.

Caregivers: This coupon is good for **one FREE 3-hour session** at Starlight Home Care. Take a break and come get to know us. Good through 4/30/17



Can We Help You?

The **Monument Hill Foundation** will accept 2017 grant requests from interested applicants from April 1st thru May 15th. Such grants will be awarded for applicant projects judged to best advance the Foundation's mission of supporting 'kids and community', especially in El Paso County, CO, and its Tri-Lakes area.

For further information about this program and the Foundation, please visit the Foundation website at www.monumenthillfoundation.org.

To obtain application instructions for this granting year, as well as an application form which can be completed on-line and submitted to our Granting Committee, click the 'Apply for a Grant' tab at the top of the site's home page.