

from the bank that the district would save on interest if the loan were to be paid off early. The board approved the immediate Station 2 loan payoff of \$1.12 million from the reserve fund. Station 2 was built in 2012. See www.ocn.me/v12n5.htm#dwfpd.

Ridings and Lt. Curt Leonhardt

presented information about the Type 6 Wildland Engine proposed by Burns. Ridings explained that the truck has a smaller cabin chassis (550/5500) and is equipped with a smaller pump that can go to wildland and grassland fires. The district is seeking to replace a 1999 Ford 550 truck that has experienced transmission and other mechanical issues over the past few deployments. A special committee was formed to research the purchase and submitted requests for proposal from two companies. Ridings commented that the truck meets the district's needs and would not just be used for deployments. Leonhardt estimated a six-to-nine month wait for the truck to be built. "There is really no end to the fire season anymore," Ridings commented.

Director Harland Baker pointed out that the truck would be a revenue generator for the district because the federal government pays for deployments. The board discussed the pros and cons of selling or donating the old brush truck. After further discussion, the board voted to approve the purchase of the Type 6 Engine for an estimated \$170,000.

Baker asked Burns to provide the



Above: Family and friends showed support for George Laugesen at his swearing in as a career firefighter for the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District at the March 20 board meeting. Front row from left: Luke Fallentine, Huey Laugesen, Walter Laugesen, Tachiana Hernandez, G. Roy Laugesen, Caedyn Fallentine, and Fred Laugesen. Back row from left: Wayne Laugesen, Dede Laugesen, Oscar Laugesen, Sheri Fallentine, and George Laugesen. **Right,** girlfriend Hernandez pins the firefighters' badge on Laugesen. Photo by Jennifer Kaylor.



directors with an updated budget next month, so they could see the new balances after all these very large capital outlays were made.

District prepares for May 8 polling place election

Popovich remarked that ballots for residents who qualified under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) had been mailed and provided a timeline of activities prior to the May 8 election.

All other district residents who wish to vote must personally visit the Wescott polling place at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 90821. The hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on May 8.

Election candidates for the four-year terms are: Gary Rusnak, Duane Garrett, Greg Gent, Mark Gunderman, and Joyce Hartung. Candidates for the two-year term are: Rachel Dunn and write-in candidate Larry Schwarz.

See related DWFPD candidate statements on page 13.

Caution to community about fire season and restrictions

Burns discussed recent El Paso County wildland fires in which Wescott firefighters assisted and noted that the fires are becoming bigger and more frequent. Due to dry weather conditions, Burns cautioned that the community remains under a stage one fire restriction. "The last round of snow we had was not enough to make a difference" in the fire danger, he said.

Burns announced that as of March 28, the district would staff Station 2 on Highway 83, which was not staffed at all last year due to budget constraints. He also confirmed the intention of the DWFPD and the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) boards to schedule a social event after the May election.

Burns reported that Wescott received a donated home that the district was using for a wide variety of training drills before demolition.

Ridings provided statistics for February's response activity. Wescott firefighters responded to 39 EMS and 29 fire-related incidents. The district provided automatic aid in 12 calls and received aid from other districts in four calls. One fire incurred a \$115 loss, which was "a few bales of hay."

Residents speak and board listens

Resident and Gleneagle North Homeowners' Association (HOA) Treasurer

Gary Rusnak provided the board documentation of his budget analysis. Using 2017 actual income and expense figures provided in the 2018 approved budget, Rusnak critiqued the district's itemization of various expenses and noted mathematical inaccuracies. Gent thanked him for presenting these questions and said the board would definitely look at all of them.

During final public comments and after board approval of the Station 2 payoff and Type 6 Wildland Engine, Rusnak argued that the board's comments regarding wildland deployment income offsetting the Type 6 Wildland Engine expense repudiated Ridings' previous written comment in September that the district does not profit from wildland deployments.

Resident Dennis Feltz expressed his concern that Station 2 would be staffed again, stating that this was a different operational plan from the one presented prior to the November 2017 election to increase the mill levy. Feltz explained, "With staff at both stations, there will never be a four-man engine crew staffed with paid firefighters and I am concerned for the safety of my family and our community."

The board went into executive session at 8 p.m. to consult with its attorney about the Colorado Open Meetings Act. Popovich told OCN that the board did not take any votes or make any announcements when the meeting returned to open session.

The next DWFPD Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 17 at 7 p.m. and will be preceded by the Volunteer Pension Board meeting, which begins at 6:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Drive. Please call (719) 488-8680, a non-emergency number, for more information, or visit www.wescottfire.org. Wescott is also on Facebook and Twitter.

Belated thanks to Natalie Barszcz, Lisa Hatfield, and John Howe for recording, documenting, and photographing the Feb. 20 board meeting reported in the March issue of OCN.

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GARY RUSNAK for Wescott Fire Protection District Board

I'm Gary Rusnak and I'm running for the Wescott FPD Board of Directors on May 8, 2018.

The residents of the fire district elect the board to represent us, the residents/taxpayers, with regard to the operations of the Fire Protection District. With four Board of Directors positions up for election, it is time to put a people's representative on the BoD and allow for us taxpayers to be heard.

I'm not like the other candidates. I stand for:

- No more limitations on public comments during BoD meetings.
- Open communications with the public before actions are taken allowing for those whom the BoD represents, and those who are taxed, to provide their valuable insights and opinions as well provide the critical checks and balances.
- Fiscal responsibility. I have over 40 years of experience in Government Financial Management.

- Collaborated with El County Officials seeking/obtaining partnerships that has enhanced our local community.

- Fact-based decisions versus today's unplanned reactionary actions that only allow public comment after decisions, instead of during the decision process.

- Obtain equal taxation across the entire district taxpayers—today there are some taxed at 7 mils and most taxed at 21 mils.

- Seek opportunities to minimize the tax burden, such as consolidation, or combination with other districts.

- Actually implement what was said and justified to the public.

- Finally, you know where I stand if you have followed the Wescott FPD board meeting articles in *OCN* over the past 18 months. Visit www.ocn.me and search "Gary Rusnak."

Gary Rusnak: Your representative, speaking for us taxpayers.

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CHAMBER CONCERT SERIES

"THE SUPREME MYSTERY"

Colin McAllister, guitar

Sunday, April 15, 2018
2:30 PM

Tickets:
Adult: \$20
Seniors/Students: \$15

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Description: This concert celebrates the creation of melody through a variety of works from different historical periods. We'll hear two concerti: the early 18th century Concerto in D Major by Antonio Vivaldi, and from British composer Richard Harvey, the thrilling and virtuosic Concerto Antico. Rounding out the program are pieces by Hildegard von Bingen, Radames Gnattali and Joaquin Turina with pianist, Kelly Zuercher.

Spring Retreat

"YOU ARE LOVED, FORGIVEN AND PURSUED BY A JEALOUS GOD."

Saturday, April 14
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Fee: \$45

Presenter: Sister Rose Ann Barmann, OSB

Retreat Description:

Come and realize that from your mother's womb, you are cherished and invited to participate in the Oneness and Threeness of God. Experience and rest in the knowledge that you are loved, forgiven and pursued by a jealous God.



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