

**Above:**Palmer Lake Mayor John Cressman, left, and Trustee Mitchell Davis at the June 27 Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District meeting. They expressed concern for the future of the Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department and asked TLMFPD to consider expanding its service area to include Palmer Lake if Palmer Lakes voters agreed to the stipulations. *Photo by Allison Robenstein.*

consolidation, fire authority, or other option bringing the two districts together, Lance said.

TLMFPD Director and Town of Monument Public Works Director Tom Tharnish said the benefits to district residents must be at the forefront of their discovery process.

Truty said these exploratory discussions must be methodical to highlight commonalities and differences in operations between the two organizations. Budget, mill levies, debt, training, and operational differences between the two districts will be topics of discussion.

Martin asked why Wescott initiated discussions

now. Hildebrandt said new Wescott board members are interested in the change, and DWFPD Chief Vinny Burns also had several reasons for pursuing it. According to Hildebrandt and Truty, the Wescott board voted June 19 to consider bringing the districts together.

**Note:** The DWFPD board discussion about the “relationship building” social gathering did not include a formal vote but gave informal direction. See related Wescott article on page 9.

The TLMFPD board voted unanimously for Truty to evaluate possible effects of consolidation with DWFPD.

**2017 audit presentation**

Mitch Downs of Osborne, Parsons & Rosacker LLP presented the results of the 2017 audit and gave it an unqualified or “clean” opinion. He mentioned that he noted only two adjustments, compared to 27 adjustments two years ago. Truty thanked district CPA Becky Weese and bookkeeper Jenny Bilbrey for the work they do for TLMFPD.

**Used ambulance purchase**

The board approved the purchase of a used ambulance from the Castle Rock Fire and Rescue Department to replace TLMFPD’s reserve vehicle, which is not reliable. Although the vehicle is likely worth more, TLMFPD’s offer of \$30,000 was accepted.

The new ambulance that was approved in the 2018 budget will not arrive until later this year.

The money will come from either excess Specific Ownership Tax revenues projected to be ahead of budget or from the fleet replacement fund. Converting the vehicle with TLMFPD radios and signage is expected to cost less than \$10,000.

**Gallagher update**

As at recent meetings, Truty explained the Gallagher Amendment to the board. The amendment, a provision of the state constitution, was designed to maintain a constant ratio in property tax revenue, with 45 percent coming from residential property and 55 percent from business property.

Due to Colorado’s population growth and statewide increases in residential property values, the assessment rate will decrease. Tri-Lakes Monument depends on property tax revenue for about 88 percent of its total revenue. However, by 2020, it is expected the assessment rate will be reduced from 7.2 percent to about 6.11 percent, which would cause a 23 percent reduction in property tax revenue in three years, Truty said.

Fire districts and other special districts are working to find a balance between the potential lost revenues and the mill levy by increasing local mill levy rates equal to the revenue lost from the rate reduction. This is a “revenue-neutral” procedure known as “de-Gallaghering.” The Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights (TABOR) requires certain ballot procedures and language to raise tax and mill levy

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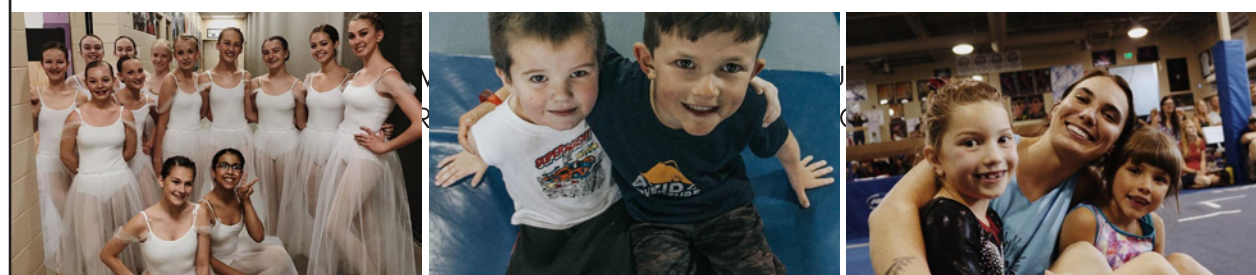



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**TIME: 1:00-3:00 PM**  
**PLACE: THE SUNDANCE STUDIO**



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