

DWFPD (Cont. from page 1)

posts and educational materials.

Directors discussed the option of placing a “de-Gallagherizing” issue on the November 2018 ballot. No specific

wording was discussed, but the intent of the issue, if pursued, would provide voters the opportunity to approve a mill levy adjustment to account for lost revenue due to a residential assessment

rate decrease. Court confirmed July 30 and Aug. 28 as the deadlines for submitting a letter of intent to participate in the general election and establishing an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Office of the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder, respectively. He also reminded the board that once an IGA is in place, campaign laws restrict the district’s ability to advocate its position on a ballot issue and that the window of time to educate the community is rapidly closing.

The board authorized Burns to send a letter of intent pertaining to a “de-Gallagherizing ballot issue” to the county on a 3-2 vote. Board Chair Bo McAllister and Director Larry Schwarz opposed the motion. Court confirmed that if the board decided not to participate in the November election, the letter of intent did not obligate them to do so.

Ridings committed to gathering up-to-date information regarding the district’s property tax outlook from the Office of the El Paso County Assessor for the next board meeting when a final election decision would be made.

Talks of combining fire districts continue

Burns reported that he and Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) Chief Chris Truty met to identify Wescott’s and TLMFPD’s compatibility in training, apparatus, personnel, union representation, and other areas. Directors affirmed the chiefs’ efforts to continue exploring options to combine, but also recognized that the process is complex and lengthy.

The board also discussed making

similar overtures to the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BF-FRPD). Although past efforts stalled, some directors indicated that BFFRPD may be receptive. Schwarz acknowledged that the board must consider the differences between Wescott and BF-FRPD; Wescott serves dense residential and commercial areas and BFFRPD’s service area includes more wildland-urban interface areas. Mill levy differences may also affect a decision to combine. “There’s no harm in asking,” was the consensus.

The board unanimously appointed Burns, Schwarz, and Director Joyce Hartung to a non-decision-making committee to discuss district-combining options with other fire districts.

Budget work session deemed very successful

Burns stated that the July 9 budget work session educated directors, line-by-line, about how the budget is developed, the meaning of line items, what is included in each line item, and where funds are located. Two members of the public attended and interacted with the board and staff throughout the 2 1/2-hour work session. When asked if they had learned what they needed to learn, the new directors’ response was an emphatic, “Yes.” Burns noted that a summary of the work session is forthcoming.

Call statistics reported, enhancements planned

District calls totaled 77 in July, reported Ridings. There were 39 fire calls and 38 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls. Station 1 responded to 63 of the calls and Station 2 responded to 14.

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