

cussed expenditures and the 2020 proposed budget. Director Jim Abendschan was excused.

Full-time firefighter/paramedic positions

Interim Chief PJ Langmaid requested a motion to turn two current part-time firefighter/paramedic positions into two full-time positions starting Nov. 10. "There is a strong possibility of losing them to another district and they are very excited about working here," he said. See ocn.me/v19n8.htm#bffrpd.

"We are playing catch up with hiring and 2021 will be significantly better," said Treasurer Jack Hinton.

Note: A nationwide shortage of paramedics exists, and retention is an ongoing problem for all departments and commercial ambulance services.

The board unanimously approved the immediate conversion of the two positions.

Flying Horse North has no hydrants

Langmaid commented on his concern that there are no fire hydrants in Flying Horse North. "I discussed the issue with Classic Homes and they just hemmed and hawed. The service agreement is unfortunately already signed, but in the future the fire chief needs to be more proactive and make sure those missteps do not happen again (on new development proposals). Literally hundreds of thousands of square feet of residential are going to require us to shuttle water in." See www.ocn.me/v18n8.htm#epcpc, www.ocn.me/v18n10.htm#epbocc, <https://epcdevplanreview.com/Public/ProjectDetails/22868>.

2020 proposed budget

The BFFRPD board, led by Hinton and Langmaid, did a line-by-line discussion of another draft of the 2020 budget, which they had already worked on extensively in September and October. Langmaid said there are several topics of concern that are not yet included in the proposed budget:

- An Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for \$400,000 worth of radios. Langmaid said he would like to secure the AFG before the 2020 budget is finalized.
- A new operations manager position to relieve the burden of extra duties that are being shared by the administrative staff.
- Four additional Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) devices.

Langmaid said money is set aside in the proposed 2020 budget for significant staffing additions, providing three extra firefighters for each shift at both stations through 2020, increased employee health insurance and benefits for a growing list of firefighters, command vehicles, replacement bunker/turnout gear, apparatus and equipment, a training budget, and facility repairs.

Langmaid said he has several contingencies in case an emergency arises, and funding needs to be cut on some line items. BFFRPD operates on 59.75% of the budget to ensure revenue is available in the first quarter of the year. This is well under the national av-

erage of 71% of the budget. "We are still being fiscally conservative, and the employees are going to see better benefits," he said.

Note: Revenue from property taxes for the first quarter of the fiscal year is not received until March 31.

Langmaid commented that the district did not get the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency (SAFER) grant to increase EMS staff for the second year in a row, most likely due to the wrong language in the grant applications. "Going forward, we need to find someone who can crush that grant writing for us, who knows the whole system inside and out," said Langmaid. Deputy Chief Jim Rebitski said, "The federal system is super-competitive and you need all the key phrases to receive a grant." See www.ocn.me/v19n9.htm#bffrpd.

Hinton said further adjustments to some line items still need to be made before the budget is balanced and available for public viewing at the Nov. 20 meeting.

Treasurer's report

Hinton said finances in the General Operating Fund are becoming depleted by the day with \$1.4 million in the bank as of September, and it is estimated that \$680,000 to \$700,000 will be remaining by the end of the calendar year. Vehicle repairs last month were \$19,000, and that was followed by \$93,600 for parts, and the labor will add an additional \$27,000. "Ambulance repairs and motor failures are expensive, and I hope that the district will catch up with vehicle repairs soon," said Hinton.

Property taxes received for September were lower than expected at only \$5,300, and Special Ownership Taxes continue to be consistent at \$16,000 to \$17,500 per month.

The financial report was accepted as presented, 4-0.

Langmaid said \$166,380 is requested to secure two chassis for the new ambulance project that were previously selected by Rebitski. The ambulances would have an expected delivery in April 2020 ahead of the state mandatory purchase deadline of July. See www.ocn.me/v19n9.htm#bffrpd.

Chief's report

Langmaid gave the following update:

- September had 88 calls with one significant structure fire, but an aggressive interior attack was possible due to the available staffing that helped save a great deal of the property.
- Part-time Firefighter/Paramedic Breana Deming is now part of the BFFRPD team as another EMS staff member. AMR transport regarding dual response with Colorado Springs is an ongoing project.
- New bunker/turnout gear has been issued to the staff members who required a replacement set. A provision for purchasing additional bunker gear will be included annually in the budget to avoid shortfalls when replacement is due.

- He located and ordered appropriate vehicle chains—the engines have drop chains that are only good up to several inches of snow and then manually applied chains are required. **Note:** Lack of apparatus tire chains were a problem during the March bomb cyclone. See www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#bffire
- Training has increased throughout the district and we are becoming a pro-active agency instead of a reactive agency.
- Three staff members are receiving training at the Premier Live Fire Education Center in Indiana, and reports from the center's education staff confirm they are performing well.
- The Type 3 brush truck is almost outfitted. Deployments to wildland fires will generate both revenue and experience.

Health insurance change

Rebitski explained the proposed new health insurance package. After the district received multiple bids, The Shultz Group offered the best overall plan at the lowest cost. The new plan would include an optional family plan. Neighboring fire districts Falcon, Cimarron Hills, and Wescott also have The Shultz Group plans. See www.ocn.me/v19n6.htm#bffrpd.

The board voted 4-0 to adopt health insurance with The Schultz Group starting in November.

Many district/departments policies adopted

Hinton requested the board adopt his policy 909 for protecting district assets with bi-annual inspections, carried out by board members in January and June. The board unanimously adopted the policy to ensure accountability for district assets.

In August, the board gave the fire chief the go-ahead to develop department policies. See www.ocn.me/v19n9.htm#bffrpd.

Langmaid requested the board adopt multiple department policies he had drafted using a policy manual supplied by the district counsel in conjunction with state policies. Director Nate Dowden said, "He would like staff to know that the board is not trying to create burdensome bureaucracy."

"The staff are looking forward to these standard operating procedures, and they will be able to view the policies later this week," said Langmaid. Dowden made the motion for the board to adopt policies 102, 104, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, and 209. The board unanimously approved the new policies for the department.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. However, the next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 20 and will include a public hearing for a petition for inclusion. See www.bffire.org.

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Oct. 23

2020 budget ideas hashed out; Red Rock Ranch HOA national Firewise award recognized; board vacancy filled

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting on Oct. 23, the board approved amendments to the 2019 budget and discussed the draft 2020 budget in great detail, including possibly adding new administrative positions. They applauded the national award honoring the work of a local neighborhood to reduce its wildfire risk. The board also filled the vacancy created when former Police Chief/board President Jacob Shirk resigned and moved out of the district in September. Treasurer Jason Buckingham was excused.

National Fire Protection Agency Firewise USA recognition

Battalion Chief/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner announced that Red Rock Ranch Homeowners' Association (HOA) had received national recognition as a Firewise USA Site of Excellence for its tremendous effort in wildland fire prevention and mitigation. He explained that on Oct. 10, the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) President/CEO Jim Pauley visited Monument to congratulate this neighborhood for its progress.

Speakers included Tom Welle, NFPA Wildland Division officer; Dave Betzler, the HOA Firewise lead; Bumgarner; state Rep. Terri Carver; Pike National Forest Ranger Oscar Martinez; and other wildfire preven-

tion partners. All who attended acknowledged TLMFPD's efforts in assisting to reduce the wildfire risk and helping homeowners with mitigating their property. OCN has reported on Red Rock Ranch's accomplishment. See www.ocn.me/v18n12.htm#photos, www.ocn.me/v19n3.htm#photos.

"It's a great feather in our cap," said board President John Hildebrandt.

Public hearing on 2019 budget amendments

Hildebrandt opened a public hearing on the 2019 amended budget but received no public comments. Chief Chris Truty said the amendment reflects the increased revenue from the sale of Engine 3 and the reallocation of reserve funds. *This was reported in ocn.me/v19n10.htm#tlmfpd.*

The TLMFPD board will vote on the amended 2019 budget at its November meeting.

Draft 2020 budget revisions could include new administrators

Truty continued last month's discussion by requesting the board consider two additional 40-hour per week administrative positions for the 2020 budget. The positions would fit into the current organization structure as follows:

- Addition of a Division Chief of Logistics—to relieve administrative responsibilities that are spread across multiple staff members

- Addition of an EMS captain—due to the "substantial" increase in numbers of ambulance runs. Currently, shift personnel and administrative staff are spending an excessive amount of time handling medical paperwork, resupplying ambulances, scheduling mandatory training with local hospitals, and coordinating with Battalion Chief of Training Jonathan Bradley.

Truty added that staff members are spending too much time on additional tasks, and their primary roles are not being carried out as efficiently as needed. The new positions might be filled from within the department, creating two vacated positions that could be filled within 30 to 60 days. Additional overtime would be necessary until such positions are filled.

Truty also suggested changing the Battalion Chief

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