

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Nov. 20

# Voters approve 6A; CDOT's I-25 weather closure plans discussed; 2020 Budget reviewed

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting on Nov. 20, Chief Chris Truty thanked the community for “de-Gallagherizing” the district, the board learned of CDOT’s new highway closure rules for inclement weather, and they held a final review of the proposed 2020 budget.

Secretary Michael Smaldino and Director Terri Hayes were excused.

## Voters approve 6A to “de-Gallagherize”

Truty expressed his gratitude to the community for their support on ballot question 6A, to “de-Gallagher” TLMFPD. “We appreciate the respect and trust the community has for us and this is certainly not something where automatically the board can decide to raise taxes, and hopefully we will never have to use that element except in a worst-case scenario,” he said.

This will allow TLMFPD to counteract the effects of a drop in the residential property tax assessment rate -from 21% to about 7% since the Gallagher Amendment was approved statewide in 1982. A comprehensive explanation of the 6A ballot measure can be found on the district’s website at //tlm-fire.org/issue-6a.

## Gap project will change highway closure criteria

Deputy Chief Randy Trost said the fol-

lowing:

- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will use a proactive philosophy of closing I-25 sooner during adverse weather conditions to keep motorists safe.
- Closures would be imminent once chain laws are in effect for Monument Hill.
- Highway motorists would not be able to divert to County Line Road and Hwy. 83 to travel northbound, since those peripheral roads would likely be in worse shape.
- Traffic could be turned back to the south at Woodmen Road where there are more traveler resources. Baptist Road could also provide resources at the westside truck stops to keep truckers from taking peripheral roads.
- Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Douglas County OEM are in discussion with CDOT and the Red Cross about communications, shelter locations, etc.
- Tri-Lakes area shelters are located at St. Peter Catholic Church and Ray Kilmer Elementary School.

Truty said we need our own separate resource list without having to go through the OEM for adverse weather conditions since more often the Tri-Lakes area experiences adverse weather conditions and nothing is happening in Briargate

or elsewhere in the county.

Text: I25GAP to 21000 to get text messages pertaining to the Gap project.

## 2020 proposed budget

TLMFPD board President John Hildebrandt opened the public hearing of the 2020 proposed budget and there were no comments for or against the budget from the public.

Truty notified the board of a few revisions that had been made since October to the proposed 2020 budget regarding healthcare and workers’ compensation.

Truty said an executive staff meeting took place after the October meeting and the administrative staff unanimously agreed that the hiring process for the proposed two new administrative positions should be fielded both internally and externally. Truty recommended that the Division Chief position be filled first, followed by the EMS Captain position and he asked the board to consider the third revised budget draft for the Dec. 4 board meeting.

Truty said the county assessor will provide the final tax assessment by Dec. 1 in time for approval of the proposed 2020 budget.

## 2019 budget amended

Hildebrandt proposed the board approve Resolution 2019-05 to amend the 2019 budget, as Truty outlined in September, to reflect the increased revenue from the sale of Engine 3 and the reallocation of reserve funds. The resolution was accepted, 5-0. See [www.ocn.me/v19n10.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v19n10.htm#tlmfpd).

## Financial report

Treasurer Jason Buckingham read the financial report noting that property taxes, Specific Ownership Taxes and ambulance revenues are ahead of estimated budget numbers for 2019. However, impact fees could potentially fall below budgeted expectations. All expenses except building expenses are

below budget as of Oct. 31.

## New EMS/Paramedic

Hildebrandt welcomed EMS/Paramedic Johnathan Hoeh and thanked his former colleagues of Donald Wescott Fire Protection District for supporting Hoeh’s transition to TLMFPD. Truty also welcomed Hoeh and said, “Wescott would be sad to see him leave but, we are lucky to have someone who knows us, and he will be a good fit and a positive asset to our organization.” Hildebrandt swore in Hoeh during the ceremony.

## Chief’s Report

Truty and Trost’s comments included:

- American Medical Response (AMR) is still in the process of negotiating a contract with Colorado Springs and a county contract could result. TLMFPD is more than happy to provide mutual aid services, but will not be a secondary provider to help AMR fulfill its contract obligations without compensation.
- Station 1 remodel: construction drawings are being finalized incorporating ideas from firefighters and the annexation process is on schedule. The project is expected to break ground in March.
- Construction access to the property at Station 1 is pending approval from the adjacent property owner.
- Station 2 and 3’s new cosmetic upgrades are complete.

## New engine was not perfect

Trost said the oil leak on the second new engine has been resolved, however, oil and coolant samples are being analyzed by a third party and the results are still pending. Detroit Diesel has agreed to provide an extended warranty on the engine component for an additional two years. Truty said, “Before we accept delivery of the second new engine, it is critical that everything

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