

The board unanimously approved the appointment of Abendschan as director to fill the vacancy left by McMoran. Director Nate Dowden encouraged Garmong and Sharp to reapply for the three positions that will become available in May 2020.

The board also unanimously approved motions to appoint Abend-

schan as director to fill the vacancy left by McMoran, appoint Vice President Rick Nearhoof as chairman of the board, and to appoint Director David Hoffpauir as vice chairman of the board.

Hoffpauir thanked Langmaid, Rebitski, McMoran, and Hinton "for making an about-face at BFFRPD since

June 2013."

Note: The Black Forest Fire started on June 11, 2013, destroying at least 509 homes resulting in the deaths of two people. The forest fire burned 14,280 acres and was 100% contained on June 20, 2013.

The board meeting adjourned at 8:03 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 meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 20. See www.bffire.org.

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Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, July 23

Search for new board member begins; firefighters promoted



Above: Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board Chairman William "Bo" McAllister administers the oath of office to Jonathan Urban, left, and Justin Chavez, who were promoted to lieutenants at the July 23 meeting. Photo by Allison Robenstein.

By Allison Robenstein

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) board held a regular meeting July 23 to discuss the search for a new board member after Director Gary Rusnak's seat became available last month. They also attended the promotion of two firefighters to lieutenant.

Board Treasurer Joyce Hartung and Assistant Chief Scott Ridings were excused.

Board accepting letters to fill seat

Chairman William "Bo" McAllister explained the process of appointing a new board member to fill the seat left open when Rusnak moved out of the Wescott district.

The board will accept letters of intent from district residents who are interested in applying for the position until Aug. 16. Send letters to District Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich, spopovich@wescottfire.org. To see if you live within the district, look at the district's map at www.wescottfire.org/contact.

The board will review the letters they receive and could vote to appoint a candidate at the Aug. 20 meeting. District Counsel Matt Court said all Colorado-based special districts including DWFPD are now required to administer the oath of office and file the signed copy with the local Clerk and Recorder before the new member can be formally seated. Therefore, the

board might also call a special meeting to speed up the new board member's ability to join in the 2020 budget discussions.

Resident Steve Simpson asked if the board is looking for a specific skill set from potential applicants. Board Secretary Mark Gunderman said someone who will listen and make the best decisions for the firefighters, who has an open mind and no agenda, would be best. Director Larry Schwarz agreed, and McAllister said he enjoys having a board composed of different views and opinions.

Two promoted to lieutenant; volunteer staff increases

Just before the board meeting, Justin Chavez and Jonathan Urban were promoted to lieutenant positions, then McAllister administered the oath of office during the regular meeting. He noted there will be another promotion to lieutenant coming soon, as well as promotions for drivers. "This has been a long time coming," he said.

Volunteer firefighter Melissa Seidenberg told the board a new class of four volunteers would start in late July, with two other volunteers starting a bit later. The district has 22 volunteers total, Seidenberg said.

Chief's report includes advocating for higher education
Chief Vinny Burns told the board he recently attended the International Fire Chiefs Association Conference & Expo, saying break-out sessions on Insurance Service Office (ISO) inspection

preparedness and firefighter family dynamics and wellness provided helpful information to improve the district's processes. Burns said he took a class on officer development and hoped to incorporate higher education opportunities for officers or those who would like to develop professionally.

Station thanked for community outreach and stable budget

During public comments, Simpson applauded Ridings for his forethought in bringing Force Broadband, a locally owned internet provider, to Station 2. Force will set up internet services and equipment inside the station, offering free internet service in return, thereby reducing the need to pay for internet services.

Mary Gunderman of the Gleneagle Women's Club thanked the district for helping residents of Paradise Villas change smoke detectors after the club requested their assistance. Burns added that all the food the women's club and others provide to the firefighters and staff is wonderful.

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for Aug. 20 at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 488-8680 or see www.wescottfire.org.

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, July 24

Board approves "De-Gallagher" ballot initiative; 2018 audit accepted

By Natalie Barszcz

At the July 24 Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District board meeting, the board approved a resolution that a district special election related to the Gallagher Amendment will be held in coordination with the El Paso County coordinated election Nov. 5, and discussed the findings of the 2018 financial audit with the auditors.

Director Michael Smaldino was excused.

Ballot issue resolution

Chief Chris Truty asked the board to approve a resolution to participate in the 2019 consolidated election with a district-wide ballot issue, and the board unanimously agreed. Over the past several months, the board has discussed the impact of Colorado's Gallagher Amendment and the impact it has on TLMFPD. See www.ocn.me/v19n6.htm#tlmfpd.

The official ballot language has not yet been determined, but as Truty has explained, special districts could

receive less tax revenue as Colorado's Residential Assessment Rate (RAR) decreases due to the Gallagher Amendment. The ballot measure will ask voters to allow the district to be proactive about stabilizing its ability to deliver quality services when the economy changes. It would do this by, if needed, allowing the district's board to raise its mill levy at a rate that makes up the revenue lost from the decreased RAR, without a vote of the people, when the state's RAR decreases. In other words, it would allow the district to retain tax revenue. So this doesn't increase taxes but only maintains them proactively.

2018 financial audit

Hilary Carlson and Mitchell Downs from the auditing firm of Osborne, Parsons and Rosacker LLP certified public accountants presented the 2018 audit to the TLMFPD board and gave it an unmodified or "clean" opinion. Downs commented that this year they found no deficiencies in the fi-

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