

By John Howe

On May 27, Forest View Acres Water District held its monthly board meeting.

It was announced that board members will not switch board positions until they can meet in person.

Treasurer Nancy Wilkins directed several questions at District Manager Lisa Jacoby of Community Resources Services of Colorado (CRS), including clarification on discrepancies in the tap fees report and Wilkins' lack of access

to certain specific financial reports. A heated debate ensued until President Brad Hogan said the board had not asked for certain reports, and he directed that Wilkins' comments about details of the contract with CRS resume at the June

24 meeting.

Water Operator Clyde Penn presented the operations report, noting continued turbidity problems in the surface water plant. The consensus was to ask JDS-Hydro for assistance. See <https://colorado.gov/fvawd> for more information. John Howe can be contacted at johnhowe@ocn.me

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District meeting May 19

New board members take oath of office

By Allison Robenstein

New board members were sworn in at the May 19 Donald Wescott Fire Protection District meeting after the May 5 election. The virtual meeting resulted in more discussions than it did votes to move the district forward. This included a postponement of the pension fund increase, the district website, and the district's strategic plan. Treasurer Joyce Hartung was noted absent.

Election results

Three board members were sworn in by Chief Vinny Burns. Incumbents Lawrence Schwarz and Duane Garrett retain their seats as directors, and Charles Fleece is seated as the fifth director. Election results were:

- Lawrence Schwarz received 138 votes.
- Duane Garrett received 137 votes.
- Charles Fleece received 107 votes.
- Steve Simpson received 84 votes.
- Chris Mendrop received 40 votes.
- Larry Cicalone did not receive any votes.

Pension fund vote postponed

During the September 2019 pension meeting, board representatives Lt. Bryan Ackerman and Lt. Tim Hampton asked the board to raise the monthly payout for the 13 retirees who receive a disbursement. An ac-

tuarial study shows a variety of increases that the board could approve. For example, to increase the current monthly payment from \$400 to \$450, the fund would need to receive an annual increase of \$6,583. See <https://ocn.me/v19n10.htm#duwfpd>.

Resident Steve Simpson suggested the pension board should consider paying retirees one lump sum rather than a monthly payment, but district counsel Michelle Ferguson said because of strict statutory requirements this might be unlawful.

Schwarz asked Ackerman to clarify the quality of volunteer bunker gear as well as volunteers' fitness training and healthcare requirements. Ackerman said volunteers receive new gear. The only difference is the volunteer gear is not rated for interior firefighting because volunteers are not allowed to fight these types of fires initially.

"Under the departmental standard operating procedures, all volunteers are the same as paid staff and are required to train for 30 minutes every day while on shift. Because volunteers don't pull as many shifts, they have to make up at home," said Ackerman.

Battalion Chief Scott Ridings said with regard to healthcare, "this was going to be the first year we got baseline" tests including chest x-rays and

cancer screening. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all their plans have been shifted to later in the year. This will include annual fit respiratory testing, agility and pack tests, and wildland fire testing.

The board decided to postpone the vote until Fleece could be part of the discussion.

District website

Battalion Chief Sean Pearson, who has taken charge of the district website and public relations, has put together a plan that involves a complete rebuild of the site. "My big goal is to make it sustainable rather than a pet project as it has been in the past."

Capital projects and strategic plan

Garrett asked the chiefs which items are completed that could come off the list of projects in the strategic plan. Burns said they have made significant personnel retention improvements. Also, the Gallagher amendment didn't become an issue as expected and could be removed. The new tender is expected in July, and E-911 will be addressing station alerting.

Burns asked that the rest of the changes be discussed and prioritized by a strategic plan committee rather than being decided by the directors. The current strategic plan is on the Wescottfire.org website.

Public comments

This reporter attempted numerous times to comment during the public comment period when all microphones should be unmuted. Unfortunately, the microphone did not appear to be unmuted at the Wescott end. It is unclear if there were other members of the public who were not able to make comments.

However, resident Shannon Garrett was able to speak, saying the department is doing a great job.

Chief's report

- Ridings said there were 81 calls for service for April took five minutes to put out.
- The Insurance Services Organization audit is going on now, and the chiefs hope they can attain a split rating, which means houses that aren't near a hydrant and require hauled water can be rated for lower insurance rates.
- Although the district has responded to COVID-19 positive calls, there has been no exposure within the district because the responders wear full personal protective equipment.
- If a COVID-19 patient has to be transported in a district ambulance, Ridings and Burns said it and all the items within the vehicles are decontaminated prior to the next call for

service.

- The battalion chiefs respond to all calls to make sure each call receives the correct response.

Burns reported the district has received numerous thank you cards, including one from a medical call on April 27. With regard to all the food being brought to the station by the public, Burns said, "We will always be accepting of that!" The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for **4 p.m.**, June 16. During the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings will either be at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr., or held as virtual meetings. They 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.wescott-fire.org.

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OCN needs your help

Are you a good listener and writer? Are you following the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District news? OCN needs your help to report on Wescott each month. We will train you! Write to editor@ocn.me with questions.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, May 20

No change in directors; 2019 audit is "clean"

By Natalie Barszcz

On May 20, the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board met via Zoom to seat the board directors for another term and heard the presentation of the 2019 audit. The board planned to meet on June 3 to discuss a permanent fire chief.

Directors retain seats

Chairman Rick Nearhoof administered the oath to the incumbent board Directors Jack Hinton, Nate Dowden, and Jim Abendschan. Nearhoof nominated Dowden for vice chair after David Hoffpaur requested to return to a director position. Nearhoof nominated Jack Hinton for another term as treasurer. See www.ocn.me/v20n5.htm#bffrpd.

The board unanimously approved the self-nominated board members and their board positions, 5-0.

Executive session regarding fire chief scheduled

Nearhoof announced an executive session would be held at Station 1 on June 3 at 7 p.m. to discuss a permanent fire chief. For specific details, visit www.bffire.org. The results will be included in the July 4 issue of *Our Community News*.

2019 audit presentation
Dawn Schilling of Schilling & Company Inc. Certified Public Accounts presented an unmodified or "clean" opinion for the 2019 audit. Schilling thanked Administrative Assistant Melissa Bottorff, Finance Director Frances Esty, and interim Fire Chief PJ Langmaid for their contribution during the audit preparation. Schilling suggested the board explore a higher yield pool investment policy for surplus funds instead of using a low



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