

funding is to wait until all the volunteers have been paid up and passed away, and most boards increase benefits.

- The pension board would need to make a motion to recommend the increase to the district board and then approve the benefit increase.

Chairman Mark Gunderman said a lot can happen in a few years, but we should set a precedence just so long as we do not have to put money into the fund.

Secretary Larry Schwarz said, "The community has given a lot of time and money to support the district and we should support the people that have given their time and earned it."

Jones said the volunteer pension fund will keep going during the authority until the merger by inclusion happens, and then the fund will be assigned to the TLMFPD board, and it will be managed separately. If a merger by inclusion happens, the pension fund cannot be left behind, said Jones.

Powell recommended the pension board approve a motion to add an agenda item for approval by the regular board at the next board meeting, for the permanent increase to the pension plan benefit "Plan B" according to the actuary study, from the current \$400 to \$450 per month for the 20-year volunteers, beginning Nov. 1.

The pension board approved the recommended permanent increase be added to the November board meeting agenda for approval, 4-0.

Note: The regular board could not approve the increase having already met, but before COVID-19 distancing protocols the volunteer pension board met before the regular board. Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich said hopefully the COVID-19 restrictions would be lifted

in time for the April 2022 meeting.

Public comment

Retired volunteer firefighter Mike Badger thanked Hampton for his hard work and the board for its attentiveness and said, "it does mean something for the retired volunteers, it is not a trivial amount, and the increase does directly affect the volunteers' way of life."

The pension board meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Station 1 roof repairs needed

Jones said Station 1 is 20 years old with a complicated roof system, and in September a section of the roof fell in over the bay resulting in water damage. The repair encompasses more than just the bay area, and about \$25,000 to \$28,000 is needed to make the repairs. Based on the insurance percentage value of the building, the district will need to pay some out of pocket and at least up to the insurance deductible. Jones requested the board approve up to \$40,000 from the district reserves for the roof repairs.

The board approved the cost of the roof repair, 4-0.

Interim chief contract extension

Gunderman said the interim fire chief's contract would now extend until the end of 2021 and required approval.

Jones said there would not be a lot for a permanent fire chief to do other than signing documents during the unification process, and a DWFPD acting chief could be his replacement. He said if the unification proceeds later in the year, it will determine the decision to conduct a search for a replacement permanent chief, as early as the October meeting and certainly in November

The board approved the extension to the contract, 4-0.

Chief's report

Jones said:

- The district has one open posi-

tion for a driver operator, and a couple of firefighters are taking their state test at TLMFPD.

- An entry-level firefighter will be hired out of the current volunteer program when the driver operator position is filled.
- Should the unification go ahead, DWFPD will build a fire academy with TLMFPD.
- There will be hiring and promotions over the next several months.

Cell tower at Station 2

Jones said the two proposals from cell tower companies could be a lot of hassle but would generate \$15,000 per year. See www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#dwfpd.

Powell said there will be a lot of work negotiating through the issues of the agreement, and the district already has a lot on its plate.

The board unanimously agreed that the chief could tell the cell tower companies that after considering the proposals it is not the right time for the district to pursue a cell tower lease agreement with the pending unification process.

Station 3 update

Jones recommended the board continue to table the discussion on Station 3.

Gunderman said there is too much going on right now in the district, and it would be a distraction from the priority focus of the unification process.

The board agreed with Gunderman.

The regular meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr., at 7 p.m. Due to COVID-19 distancing protocols, meetings are held virtually for public attendees. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 19 at 4 p.m. For updates, virtual meeting joining instructions, agendas, and minutes, visit: www.wescottfire.org or call Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680.

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Sept. 22

Deputy chief's retirement announced; wildland fire plans presented

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) meeting on Sept. 22, the board heard the deputy chief was retiring, the board president was recognized for his dedicated service, and the board received a presentation on the proposed 2022 budget, a wildland-urban interface fire emergency planning project, the 2022-26 strategic plan, and numerous other updates.

Treasurer Jason Buckingham was excused.

Deputy Chief/Division Chief of Logistics Randy Trost retiring

Deputy Chief/Division Chief of Logistics Randy Trost announced his retirement after 36 years in the fire service and serving the last seven years at TLMFPD. "TLMFPD is a great place to work, and I plan to remain involved in the community, but I have had a good run and will stay connected to the department," said Trost. He thanked the

board, the men and women of the organization for their professionalism, and the community for their trust and financial support to the district.

Dedicated service award

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and the board applauded board President Dr. John Hildebrandt for receiving the dedicated service award for 23 years of service to the TLMFPD at the Special District Association during its annual conference in Keystone on Sept. 14.

Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Emergency Planning project

Retired Battalion Chief/CEO/Principal Mike Rohde of Rohde and Associates LLC., Orange County, Calif., presented the board with the Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Emergency Planning project and said the following:

- Pre-plan fire risk mitigations and wildland pre-plans are necessary to expedite response during a large-scale wildland fire.



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Above (from left): Special District Association (SDA) Executive Director Ann Terry, Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board President John Hildebrandt receiving the SDA dedicated service award, and Fire Chief Andy Kovacs are pictured at the SDA conference in Keystone on Sept. 14. Hildebrandt has served on the Board of Directors at TLMFPD for nearly 23 years. Photo by Bonnie Hildebrandt.