

TLMFPD (Cont. from 18)

lion in 2020, it's not uncommon for districts to spend less revenue and be conservative when developing annual budgets.

- There were no significant difficulties completing the audit and unrestricted access was available to records and personnel while conducting the audit.
- There were no significant deficiencies with internal controls.

Downs recommended that the district maintain good controls over electronic check payments moving forward, because it is anticipated that paper checks will eventually go away.

The board accepted the 2020 audit as presented, 6-0.

Vice President Roger Lance said the district staff is doing an "excellent job," and he thanked the auditors on behalf of the board and the district.

Wescott unification

Deputy Chief Randy Trost said that Chief Andy Kovacs and Interim Chief Warren Jones of DWFPD have scheduled Emergency Services International Consultants to meet in person with board members and staff Aug. 4-5 to discuss the unification process as part of the approved feasibility study. See www.ocn.me/v21n6.htm#tlmfpd/dwfpd www.ocn.me/21n7.htm#tlmfpd/dwfpd and the DWFPD article on page 17.

Station 1 remodel

Trost said the following:

- The Station 1 remodel has been moving along quickly since it began on June 9 with the demolition of the existing living quarters, the excavation completed, and the additional footings framed.
- The rough-in mechanicals in the remodel section of the existing building has begun and framing is about to begin.
- Some crew members are finding the trailers a little inconvenient, but the air conditioning is working well and the district is keeping employees updated weekly and ensuring needs are met.

The project is exciting and moving along as planned, with completion expected on Oct. 11, said Trost. See www.ocn.me/v21n6.htm#tlmfpd.

A thank you

The district thanked Capt. Dean Wahl, division chief of Logistics, for his contributions to the fire district. Wahl retired from a long career in the fire service at

the end of May. He was the project manager for the Station 1 remodel in his last year of service. See www.ocn.me/v20n7.htm#tlmfpd.

Station 1 training center update

Trost said the following:

- A cross-section of all ranks from each shift, new and senior employees, and staff members completed a survey to help establish the priorities and components that could be included in the proposed training center at Station 1.
- The next step will be to evaluate the survey results and score the priorities for the design of the training center, and then get everyone together to generate dialogue and discuss the potential design features and individual opinions.
- The design planning priorities discussion will be completed in time to plan the funding for the 2022 budget planning phase.

Training update

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said the district has been conducting structure training using a vacant house provided by Darlene Johnson and Randy Estes at 231 Front St., Monument, and added:

- The property has been used for two months of training so far, and "it is an incredibly generous donation and a really nice resource to have."
- The building will be used for a few more weeks and is the second property the couple have temporarily donated for training purposes.
- The building is being used for in-service training for the new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, firefighter rescue training, hose training drills, and some destructive drills that will be carried out before the building is demolished in late August, but no burning will be involved.
- DWFPD has also used the vacant building for training every week and has been helpful running National Fire Protection Association 1410 drills for both districts last week.

TLMFPD completed 707 hours of training hours that included EMS training in June, but the majority took place in the vacant property, said Bradley.

Northwest Passage Exercise

Trost said the Northwest Passage Exercise is scheduled to take place on Oct. 2, and the district is organizing the fire response and participating in the planning meetings with regional partners and the lead organization of the event, the Office of Emergency Management.

Financial report for June

Treasurer Jason Buckingham said that June repre-

sents the halfway mark of the budget year and added the following:

- The district has received about \$6.177 million of the projected property taxes representing about 67% of the project revenue of \$9.2 million.
- Special Ownership Taxes received were \$526,516 and are 8.5% higher than expected year to date, with a projected annual revenue of \$900,000.
- Ambulance fees received were \$387,142 and are 3% under year to date of the projected annual revenue of \$825,000.
- Impact fees have met projections for the year at \$126,998, 101.6% of the predicted \$125,000 for the 2021 budget year.

Overall revenue year to date is \$7.2 million, which represents about 63.2% of the projected 2021 income budget expected to be \$11.4 million, said Buckingham.

Director of Administration Jennifer Martin said the district is experiencing a big increase in senior transports, and Medicaid insurance coverage for residents over 65 could explain the current decline in ambulance fees.

Buckingham said that overall expenses are almost \$4.5 million year to date of the projected 2021 expense budget that is set at \$9.1 million, and the mid-year budget expenses are slightly under projections. Fifteen electronic transactions above \$2,500 were reviewed, and he noted:

- \$19,067 for the Heart and Cancer Trusts.
- \$7,120 for the Station 1 remodel.
- \$25,000 for the closing costs for the sale of Suite 103.

Buckingham said the Heart and Cancer Trusts work a little better than workers compensation and provide an additional protection for employees.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the Chamber of Commerce, 166 Second St., downtown Monument. For Zoom meeting instructions, minutes, and agendas, visit www.tlfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, July 8 and 22

Board charts course on short-term rentals

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) met three times in July. Regular board meetings were held on July 8 and July 22. The board also held a workshop on July 22 to begin work on managing short-term rental (STR) properties.

At its July 8 meeting, the board asked for more information on the issue of STR's. The board voted on its amended noise ordinance and continued its long-running efforts to update the town's marijuana odor control ordinance to balance the interests of cannabis growers and nearby residents who are affected by smells they allege come from cannabis cultivation. The board heard updates on Elite Crane's move to another location in Monument and on the effort to assess the status of The Living Word Church property. A vote was taken on a resolution to use grant funds to do a drainage study on High Street.

Cynthia Kuchinsky was recognized for her work on the Festival on the Fourth, and the board discussed whether to continue leasing town property to Sportriders for use as a dirt bike track. A special event permit for the third annual TryAthlon was granted, and two new businesses were introduced. Finally, Trustee Karen Stuth asked all residents to sign up for

the town's newsletter.

Short-term rental policy begins to take shape

Mayor Bill Bass opened the July 8 workshop by requesting a summary of the STR discussion at the Planning Commission meeting held the previous night and any suggestions town staff had on the issue.

Town Administrator Dawn Collins said the Planning Commission had asked the board to define an STR as a rental for less than 30 days and to limit STRs to properties that were owner-occupied and were the owner's principal residence for at least nine months of the year. The Planning Commission also recommended that all STRs have a minimum of one permanent parking space and provide insurance. The town currently does not have an ordinance that addresses STRs, Collins said.

STR owners present at the workshop expressed reservations about the Planning Commission's recommendations. One owner pointed out that Palmer Lake had no hotels that might lose business to STRs. Another said she owned more than one STR and would lose income if owner residency was a requirement. She suggested that the town limit STRs to 25% of the town's residences. A third owner said she had owned an STR for two years with few problems. In response to a question from Trustee Karen Stuth, four of the owners said their STR was inside their homes, and one said her STR was in a separate building.

Amy Hutson, who sits on the Planning Commission, said its intent was to limit short-term visitors to the town, to prevent big corporations from dominating the STR business in the town, and to retain Palmer Lake's small-town atmosphere.

Trustee Darin Dawson said he thought the residency requirements suggested by the Planning Commission "would be a point of contention," especially

for owners with more than one STR. He also expressed his concern that businesses might buy up residences leading to higher housing prices. An understanding of how many STRs currently exist in Palmer Lake would be valuable, Dawson said, and added that he thought the town needed an ordinance addressing the issue.

Dawson said he did not want to create an investment opportunity in an already overheated housing market. He recommended assessing a bed tax on STRs and requiring them to have a business license. He said he thought it would not be legal to say "who can buy what" in the town. He proposed making the bed tax a percentage of the daily rental fee so that the tax would move with the market.

Trustee Jessica Farr also argued in favor of licensing and taxing STRs.

Trustee Nicole Currier said that Colorado Springs requires a license for each STR, and the sales tax is based on the daily rental cost.

Stuth pointed out that STRs are important to economic development.

Toward the end of the workshop, Collins reminded the STR owners that the staff was looking only for direction and that a draft resolution hadn't yet been written. She also pointed out that another approach she had seen was to focus on resident-owned STRs and not on owner-occupied STRs in any proposed ordinance.

At the regular board meeting following the workshop, Bass said he did not support making owner-occupancy a requirement. Attorney Stephen Krob, who was attending the meeting in place of Town Attorney Mathew Krob, recommended making any limitations on STRs a gradual process, and told the board to use fees, which are roughly proportional to the cost of the service, rather than taxes. Fees would allow the board to give preferential treatment to residents, who would



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