

The board scheduled a workshop on the 2023 budget on Thursday, Sept. 29 at 4 p.m. and a public hearing on the budget at a special meeting on Thursday, Nov. 17. Both will be held at the Town Hall.

Community forums to discuss the Community Master Plan are scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 6 at 4 p.m. and Saturday, Oct. 8 at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall.

A candidate forum is scheduled for

Saturday, Oct. 1 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Town Hall. The mayor's seat and three seats on the board will be decided on the Nov. 8 ballot. Questions for the candidates can be emailed to info@palmerlake.org with the subject CANDIDATE QUESTION.

**Executive sessions**

An executive session was convened on

Sept. 8 to discuss possible sale of personal property at Elephant Rock and a personnel matter.

An executive session was convened on Sept. 22 to consider possible sale of town property, personnel matters, and the evaluation of the town administrator.

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The next two board meetings are scheduled for Oct. 13 and 27. See the town's

website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

*Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Sept. 20*

# Mill levy adjustment recommended; board pushes ahead with merger

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting on Sept. 20, the board heard about a request to adjust the mill levy in response to a temporary drop in the Residential Assessment Rate (RAR) and discussed the timeline and actions for the next phase of the merger with Monument Fire District (MFD). The board also held an executive session to discuss the lease, transfer, or sale of the district's Sun Hills Station 6 (formerly DWFPD Station 3).

Treasurer Duane Garrett was excused. Director Charles Fleece joined via Zoom.

### Residential Assessment Rate adjustment

District attorney Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm said the district will have a temporary loss of revenue for the next three years from the passing of Senate Bill 22-238. The bill is an attempt to mitigate the tax burden impact on homeowners caused by the rapid rise in home values. However, the assessment rate reductions are not consistent, and varying adjustments are tweaked

for different types of properties such as single family, multi-family, lodging, agricultural, and renewable energy, coupled with different time periods for the implementation, adding complexity, said Powell. See <https://leg.colorado.gov/bill/SB22-238> and SB22-293.

Powell also said:

- The governmental entities that rely on property tax revenue are going to lose out over the next three years with all the overlapping reductions.
- A lot of districts are scrambling with less revenue on the horizon to maintain the same service demands.
- DWFPD is one of a few unique districts that can maintain and stabilize revenues after the community passed the de-Gallagher ballot issue in November 2020.
- The board can float the mill levy without an election to recapture revenue over the next three years. See the BFFRPD article on page 16.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the following:

- It is anticipated that DWFPD would lose about \$77,386 in 2023, and he

recommended the board approve an increase of 0.4 mills (for a total of 15.3 mills) for the sub-district and 0.17 mills (for a total of 7.17 mills) for the district.

- The same recommendation will be made to the MFD board to increase the mill levy by 0.5 mills to avoid losing about \$260,000 in revenue for the MFD 2023 budget.
- Initially it did not seem like a big deal with the combined district projected income of about \$16 million, but it is a couple of salaries for the new firefighters, or half an engine.
- The Residential Assessment Rate for single residences is set to return to 7.15 % in 2025, but a lot of advocacy groups are angling for permanent reductions.

A board decision will need to be made by the end of the year whether to increase the mill levy in time to inform the county assessor, said Kovacs.

### Merger progress

Kovacs said that the district had been in "lock-step" with Powell and Dan Fallon of One Digital Insurance, Financial Services

and HR consulting advisory firm, Englewood, to complete the steps to transfer the DWFPD personnel to Monument Fire District on Aug. 28. Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich, and the administration staff worked hard behind the scenes. It was labor intensive, but everything went smoothly due to the efforts of the office team. Everyone is paid, insured and happy, said Kovacs.

Powell thanked everyone for their patience with her, in particular the administrative staff and the board through the merger process, and said:

- The next step is to transfer the stations, apparatus, and equipment. The bills of sale for the apparatus and the equipment, as well as the quit claim deeds for the stations (except for the Sun Hills station), have been prepared, and those will be presented in October after the MFD legal counsel and board have signed the documents.
- Phase 1 of the merger is almost complete, and then the full-service intergovernmental agreement will



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# YES ON 4A

## Great schools for our kids and our community.


If we don't have great teachers, it's our kids who suffer as they go to college and become adults. Nobody wants that.

**The Problem**  
D38 teachers are paid, on average, 10% less than other local school districts. Teacher turnover is near 30% and the district still had more than 40 unfilled positions at the start of this year. Ultimately that **hurts our kids.**

**The Solution**  
Issue 4A will make D38 and Monument Academy more competitive for great teachers and will help us retain the ones we have now.

**It's Simple**  
The revenue from 4A can only be used to increase salaries for teachers and support staff. It would not go to administrative salaries or other costs.

**Accountability**  
A citizens committee will oversee the MLO funds.



For details, including cost information, visit: [YesForD38.com](http://YesForD38.com)

Paid for by Friends of D38, Kyle Blakely, Registered Agent..