

- At the Dec. 6, 2016, board meeting, the Sun Hills HOA or perhaps a group of residents insisted the district delay selling the property due to the covenant restrictions on minimum lot sizing. See [www.ocn.me/v17.n1.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v17.n1.htm#dwfpd).
- The district sought advice from the county, and it was found that the Board of Adjustment authorized the property for the additional use as a fire station in 1982, but the parcel had always been approved for use as a private residence without the need to seek an additional variance.
- Legally the 1500 Sun Hills Drive property can only be used as a residential property or by a fire protection district under the variance, and the special use permit was granted over 40 years ago.

Powell said the property cannot be sold to a nonprofit agency for any purpose and the zoning is simply not there for any other purpose such as commercial or a public works department. A broker allows for transparency during the sale, and the property will be listed with Multiple Listing Services, and signage will be placed on the property. The board is at liberty to postpone for a month to allow the public time to comment, but nothing will change, and the zoning will be the same in 30 days, said Powell.

Fleece said the district tried to sell the property six years ago, and there was a huge backlash from the residents and the HOA. "I have recused myself from the executive sessions and other discussions regarding the sale of the property, but the board has not reached out to the HOA and the residents." See [www.ocn.me/v16.n7.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v16.n7.htm#dwfpd). There is a lot of concern the board is making a rash decision, and even though Powell and Duke educated the board, the public ought to be informed about how the property can be sold, said Fleece. See [www.ocn.me/v16n11.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v16n11.htm#dwfpd) and [www.ocn.me/17n2.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/17n2.htm#dwfpd).

Schwarz said the building is a haphazard structure pieced together over time, with safety and code issues. The agenda is what it is, and the process of selling 1500 Sun Hills Drive has inevitably brought the public to the forum. He thanked the five residents in attendance and agreed the board should now do some outreach in the community.

Treasurer Duane Garrett agreed the board should table the decision for a month, but not to extend it out further, and make a timely decision.

Gunderman said the unification path is not a done deal and there is a lot of work to take place, and he said:

- The sale of the station will not have a huge impact on the operational abilities of the Monument Fire District budget.
- The merger could still be derailed, and if Wescott goes back to being Wescott, the financial prospect is grim, and the proceeds from the sale of the property would then have a bigger impact.
- DWFPD would still have two stations requiring major renovation work, with Station 4 (formerly station 1, on Gleneagle Drive) in need of an entire overhaul to bring it up to speed. In the old Wescott budget, there is no money for renovations.
- The can has been kicked down the road for a long time over the sale of 1500 Sun Hills Drive, and the board has to decide for the entire district and that may not please every resident.
- The district will have the expense of two elections in 2023 for the merger and renovation work on the fire stations, that all costs money.
- As far as EIS purchasing the property, it does not qualify as a nonprofit.

Gunderman thanked the residents for their input and said he appreciated the comments. He recommended tabling approval of a broker, to allow further discussion.

Powell said leasing the station to EIS would be a short-term solution, and it is not recommended with the district undertaking a final merger with MFD in two years. Wescott will not be able to hold the station beyond the next two years unless it is transferred to MFD, and then it would be a question for their legal counsel, said Powell.

Director Mike Forsythe said that he served as a firefighter in the district for 10 years, and he remembers former Chief Bill Sheldon who lived behind the station saying, "the building represented the department and grounds for district training." The facility is no longer a good training facility, and the fire service is a moving progressive operation,

and money is needed to further enhance the department for the good of the district. The board should see the sale through and allow the funds to go toward the greater good, understanding that the residents do not want a strange building in the neighborhood, said Forsythe.

The board unanimously agreed to postpone approval of a broker agreement for at least 30 days.

#### Bill of sale/quit claim deed approval

Bradley requested the board approve the facilities and vehicle transfer bill of sales and quit claim deeds to Monument Fire District. See [www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#dwfpd).

The board approved and authorized Gunderman and Schwarz to sign the documents facilitating the transfer, 5-0.

#### 2023 budget presentation update

Bradley said the projected revenue for the district in 2023 had not changed from the September meeting, but the legal fees for the 2023 budget had been increased to \$75,000 to handle the inclusion fees, and the 2023 elections needed to complete the merger.

#### Chief's Report

Bradley highlighted some of the monthly Chief's Report for the board. See MFD article on page 18.

**Note:** Both the DWFPD and MFD boards receive the same monthly Chief's Report. The report can be viewed along with board agendas, minutes, and various information at [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org) and [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org). Upcoming board agendas are posted on the district websites no less than 24 hours in advance of board meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

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Meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month at MFD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, at 4 p.m. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 15 at 4 p.m. Meeting attendance is open to the public in person or via Zoom. For joining instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org) or [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at [nataliebarszcz@ocn.me](mailto:nataliebarszcz@ocn.me).

### Monument Fire District, Sept. 28 and Oct. 26

## Mill levy adjustment approved; 2023 proposed budget presented

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Sept. 28, the board approved a mill levy adjustment and approved the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) bills of sale and quit claim deeds. The board also received a presentation of the proposed 2023 budget, approved a reallo-

cation of funds for a station remodel, witnessed a promotion ceremony, and received multiple updates. On Oct. 26 the board received further updates to the budget, heard about the hiring and recruitment program, and witnessed two recently graduated firefighter/paramedics take the oath of office.

Director Terri Hayes was excused on Sept. 28 and Oct. 26. Secretary Mike Smaldino was excused on Oct. 26.

#### 2023 mill levy adjustment

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the district is requesting a mill levy adjustment to offset the anticipated loss of about \$260,000 in property tax revenue in 2023 due to the state Legislature's temporary reduction in the Residential Assessment Rate (RAR) to 6.95%. The district feels it is a significant amount of money coupled with the DWFPD anticipated \$77,000 loss in property tax revenue for 2023. See [www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#dwfpd) and [www.ocn.me/v22n11.#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n11.#dwfpd). **Note:** The district voters passed a ballot question in November 2020 to de-Gallagher. The district is permitted to raise the mill levy to match any lost revenue resulting from a drop in the RAR. The RAR was 7.15% for 2022, and will temporarily drop to 6.95% for 2023 and 2024. See <https://leg.colorado.gov/bill.SB22-238> and [SB22-293](https://leg.colorado.gov/bill.SB22-293).

President John Hildebrandt said he recommended the board approve the mill levy adjustment of about .5 mills to recoup lost revenue, matching up to the existing 18.4 mills, without any mill levy increase.

Treasurer Tom Kelly said that whatever the mill levy increase is, it should not be above the voter approved amount.

Director of Administration Jennifer Martin said the certification of the mills can happen in December.

The board approved the adjustment to the mill levy 6-0, based on the revenue lost with the temporary RAR reduction for the budget year 2023.

#### Property transfer

Kovacs requested the board approve the bills of sale and the quit claim deeds for the transfer of two fire stations, apparatus, and equipment from DWFPD, and then after the DWFPD board signs the documents in October, the bill of sales and quit claim deeds will be signed by the MFD board in October.

The transfer of property completes phase 1 of the merger, then DWFPD will initiate two ballot questions for the November 2023 election in phase 2. The last task for the intergovernmental agreement phase of the merger will be to legally change the district name from Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District to Monument Fire District in 2024.

The board approved the bill of sale and quit claim deed forms as presented on Sept. 28 in a roll call vote, 6-0.

#### Draft 2023 budget

Kovacs said the DWFPD revenue for 2023 is projected to be about \$3.1 million and MFD is projected to be about \$16.5 million, giving the combined district revenue total of about \$19.6 million. The anticipated property tax revenue for MFD is about \$10.9 million, but the district had not received the final estimate from the county assessor, he said.

Kovacs also proposed:

- Facilities Capital of about \$2.8 million for a water bore at Station 1, the district training center, build a new Station 3, make renovations to Station 4, a dorm remodel at Station 5, station alerting, and a full re-

## Gail Elizabeth (Hamula) Gross

1955-2022



Gail Elizabeth (Hamula) Gross age 66 of West Bend, Wisconsin went to be with her Lord and Savior on Monday, October 10, 2022. She was surrounded by her loving family at Cedar Community Home Health and Hospice.

Gail was born October 26, 1955 in San Antonio, Texas to Ruth (Schenk) and Dr. Warren

Hamula. She grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana and Colorado Springs, Colorado. In 1975, she graduated from Cheyenne Mountain High School.

Multi-talented in sports, music and academics, at an early age Gail chose to focus on figure skating. When her family moved from Indiana to Colorado, she honed her craft with some of the best coaches and athletes of her sport at the famous Broadmoor World Arena. She enjoyed considerable success including many consecutive National competitions during her teen years. Her greatest achievements came when she entered the ranks of Pairs Skating. In 1977 and 1978, she and her partner Frank Sweiding won the U.S. Pairs Silver Medal and a birth on the World Team. They placed 7th in the World Championships in Tokyo, Japan and went on to win two International Competitions. Then Frank and Gail left the amateur ranks and became professional skaters for a number of years as principle performers in Ice Capades. Gail continued with her love of skating by coaching at several training facilities around Washington, D.C., Denver, Colorado and as director of skating in Zweibrücken, Germany.

On May 31, 1984, Gail was united in marriage to Franklin C. Gross in Castle Rock, Colorado. Their various homes included Kansas, Colorado and several assignments in Germany. Gail and Frank were a true Air Force couple immersing themselves at each of his duty stations. During those years Gail earned her BA

from the University of Maryland. She went on to graduate #1 in her class at Wichita State University in Dental Hygiene School. Gail practiced for some 20 years in Colorado and Wisconsin until afflicted with a rare and terminal neurologic disease, Multiple Systems Atrophy (MSA). Her courageous battle in recent years touched the lives of her care givers and new friends in assisted living, full nursing and hospice care.

Gail will best be remembered by many for her petite size and powerful skating as well as her devotion to her husband. However, to those closest to her, Gail's quiet faith was her foundation throughout life.

Gail is survived by her siblings, Dr. Sharon (Mike) Burow of Slinger, Wisconsin and Dr. David (Keri) Hamula of Monument, Colorado; nephews and nieces Matthew (Jodi) Burow of West Bend, Wisconsin, Katherine (Ryan) O'Keefe of Hartford, Wisconsin, Steven Hamula of Monument, Colorado, sister-in-law Paula (Ron) Duncan of Colorado Springs and stepdaughter Jennifer (Chris) Sokolowski of Denver, Colorado. She is further survived by her great nieces and nephews Madeleine, Taylor, Michael, Andrew, Jacob, Caleb and Molly. Gail was preceded in death by her mother, father and beloved husband of 27 years, Frank.

A Memorial Service honoring Gail's life will be held Saturday, November 5, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Shimon Funeral Home, 824 Union Street Hartford, Wisconsin 53027. Family will greet relatives and friends at the funeral home with visitation that afternoon from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

A private memorial gathering will be held for immediate family in Colorado on a later date with committal at the Church of Woodmoor Cemetery in Monument, Colorado.

In lieu of flowers her family requests donations on her behalf to be sent to Cedar Community Hospice of West Bend, 5595 County Road Z, West Bend, WI 53095 for their loving and special care they provided to Gail.