

MFD (Cont. from 14)

Improvement for the Fire and Emergency Services in Fort Collins.

- Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner, Battalion Chief Scott Ridings, and Battalion Chief of Training Kris Mola had attended the same course in Fort Collins, and the goal is for the rest of the executive team to attend in 2023.
- The executive staff attended the graduation ceremony for the recruits attending the Colorado Springs Fire Academy (CSFA). The recruits graduated with others from the CSFD and the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District.
- The district had identified eight new recruits and made seven job offers with one alternate. The alternate will be contacted with a job offer after one of the initial candidates declined an of-

fer.

- The district is hoping to attract a local entry-level paramedic to attend a paramedic course in February. The job posting will close in early December.
- About 941 training hours were completed in October, and the district usually completes around 550 hours per month. Kudos to the staff for training on a regular basis.
- Firefighters Shawn Ballard, Robert Horne, and Hunter Ortuno began Paramedic Training School at Penrose St. Francis Hospital in October. They are doing well and will be off shift for several months.
- Bumgarner reached out to 625 students in the district during Fire Prevention Month in October.
- Stations 1 and 4 had received new signage that is backlit in red.

- The DWFPD Rosenbauer 2000 engine was sold to a fire department in Bowie, Ariz., for \$40,000.

Local 4319 food drive

Director of Administration Jennifer Martin said an update from Local 4319 representative Engineer Adam Wakefield confirmed that the Local 4319 Fifth Annual Pumpkin Giveaway had collected about 800 pounds in food donations for the Tri-Lakes Cares food pantry. The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m. at MFD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.tlmfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Nov. 16

Proposed 2023 budget presented; FAMLI program rejected

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Nov. 16, the board held a public hearing on the proposed 2023 budget, declined the option to join the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program, discussed potential development in the north of the district, heard about an unapproved additional cost for the ladder truck, and received multiple updates to include a large unexpected repair to a deployed apparatus.

Vice Chairman James Abendschan was excused.

2023 proposed budget public hearing

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said the general summary provided to the board was not correct due to a column cell not carrying over.

Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said:

- The budget had been adjusted to reflect the board direction to maintain an eight-person per day staffing model in 2023. See www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#bffrpd.
- The wages reflect a 3% cost of living allowance increase for 2023.
- The biggest change to the budget is the 2% reduction in the Firefighters and Police Pension Association (FPPA) compensation. That reduction allows extra funds to be allocated to training and elsewhere.

Chairman Nate Dowden said kudos to the district safety standards that had resulted in a decrease in the FPPA workers compensation in 2022.

Langmaid said it is a shock that the workers compensation decreased, considering the amount of training the district completes, and added:

- The district had also managed to move the \$5,000 per volunteer pension recipient back into the fund due to the reduction in the FPPA compensation.
- The estimated columns shown in the budget for the carry over into 2023 for the general operating funds is expected to change by December.
- Revenue would be far less if the district did not deploy to wildland fire incidents throughout the year.

Dowden said the district will certify the tax levies and

adopt the 2023 proposed budget and the fee schedule at its December meeting.

Note: The projected property tax revenue for 2023 is expected to be about \$3.7 million, and the mill levy will be set at 14.951 mills. Prior to the public hearing, notice was posted at www.bffire.org and the proposed 2023 budget was available for public inspection at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs.

Family and Medical Leave

Insurance program

District attorney Linda Glesne of the Cockrel Ela Glesne Greher and Ruhland law firm explained the FAMLI program and said:

- If the district decides to participate in the new state program, as an employer it would contribute 0.45% of each participant's paid wages.
- The staff are required to match the district contribution.
- The benefit would not be available until the district and staff had paid in to the program for a year.
- The district would need to decide to opt out by the end of the year and notify the state, otherwise the district would stay in the program for three years before being able to opt out.
- Regardless of participation, the district will need to opt out again after eight years.
- Staff could voluntarily choose to participate without district resources and record their own data quarterly to the state.
- The program is intended for employers that are not offering benefits.
- An individual contributing into the program would keep the benefit when transferring to a future employer. Each individual always has the right to opt into the program but would maintain their own records with the state.
- The benefit is not reduced even if the employer is not participating.

Langmaid said the maximum monthly benefit available to participants in the FAMLI program is \$1,300 per month, irrespective of how much each individual contributes. The district already has a program for sick leave accrual, vacation accrual, and short-term dis-

ability leave. The FAMLI program provides 12 weeks and an additional four weeks for emergency leave. He recommended the board opt out of the program, as the district already offers an adequate program. If the board opts in to the FAMLI program, the existing program would need to be modified, he said.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said the burden on the administrative staff could be cumbersome.

Langmaid said the administrative staff is already overburdened and appointments are needed to speak with Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn.

The board declined district participation in the FAMLI program, 4-0.

Note: A copy of a letter from Langmaid to staff explaining the state program was included in the board packet. OCN received the board packet upon request after the meeting.

Future development

Resident Linda Smith asked how the district planned to provide fire services to the Flying Horse North (FHN) development after the El Paso Board of County Commissioners approved an increase in home sites on Nov. 15. See *BOCC article on page 1 and letter on page 22*.

Langmaid said:

- Three conversations had taken place regarding the provision of fire service with the FHN developers.
- Information had been disseminated within the district to the public stating the district needed to purchase a ladder truck, but that was not accurate.
- The district purchased a ladder truck at the direction of the board for the current need in the community regardless of future development.
- The regional target is to have 28 firefighters show up at a structure fire. The district has a target of hiring enough staff to provide 15 firefighters per day upon buildout of FHN.
- Classic Homes executive staff have shared the anticipated projected revenue for FHN, and revenue would provide the staffing needs upon buildout.
- The district has to address Station 2 that was only built for a small volunteer staff, and it is a sub-standard station even for the current needs.
- Potentially, FHN at buildout means a large population residing in the north end of the district. A larger station will be needed to accommodate the extra staff and to house the ladder truck. The increased service needs will happen regardless of FHN.
- Preliminary estimates show a new station would cost about \$6 million to \$8 million, and engineers estimate a remodel of Station 2 to current NFPA standards would cost \$4 million to \$6 million.
- Now that the FHN developers know there is the potential for a project, the big hurdle will be the sufficiency of water for the development.
- The FHN developers are committed to working with the fire district to resolve the issues of providing fire services.

Financial report

Hinton said the district had about \$2.8 million in the General Operating Fund, including about \$236,107 in the Emergency Reserve Fund, \$193,276 in the Capital Improvement Fund, and \$137,026 for the TABOR Fund for a combined total of about \$566,409. The district received about \$131,000 in combined revenue in



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