

October, he said.

Hinton asked if the large apparatus repair bill the district received could have been taken care of by district mechanic Gavin Smith.

Langmaid said it was not an option, because the vehicle was in Oklahoma on a wildland deployment. The \$5,000 bill involved an overhead lift to remove the cab from the Rosenbauer engine to gain access to the chassis before any repairs could be made.

Hinton said the district is over budget due to the unexpected expense for the apparatus recovery during the deployment.

The board accepted the financials as presented, 4-0.

**Ladder truck update**

Deputy Chief of Operations Chris Piepenburg said the district had received video updates on the 2005 used ladder truck and it looks like a brand-new truck with the installation of new lights and paint. Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus of Alabama is fixing the water way at no cost to the district, and delivery is anticipated early to mid-January.

Langmaid said he had gone beyond board authorization to update the light package inside the Pierce tower ladder apparatus for \$3,498. Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus had forgotten to include the internal lights in the initial quote, but the apparatus supplier is spending \$9,000 to \$10,000 to replace the leaking water way.

Dowden said he agreed with the decision.

**Chief's report**

Langmaid said the following:

- He is constantly looking at the strategic landscape to ensure the district is a tremendous benefit to the whole region and maintains good relationships.
- Discussions regarding the communications system within the county are taking place to mitigate some of the existing bureaucracy and bridge communications with Colorado Springs.
- A staff meeting was scheduled in November to discuss capital needs and strategic plan for a future Station 3 in the Sterling Ranch area and the needs for a future Station 2.
- The district spends 19% to 21% of the time training, completing 1,492 hours in October, and the board can expect to see a request for an established district standard in early 2023.

**Operations and training report**

Piepenburg said:

- The district assisted Hannover Fire District with a 400-acre wildland fire behind Pikes Peak International Raceway. Immediately after helping, that team was redirected to Pueblo County to assist a rancher with a bulldozer that had spon-

taneously combusted in a pasture.

- Three staff members attended a Structural Collapse Technician Course at Alabama Fire College in Tuscaloosa. The course qualifies staff to assist on Colorado Urban Task Force 1, a Federal Emergency Management Agency team.
- The state is not abundant with fire certification courses, and the Alabama Fire College provides a "one-stop shop" for quality training programs, and the district will continue sending staff.
- Four district firefighters graduated from the Colorado Springs Fire Academy. The district was held in high regard from the instructor cadre, blending in seamlessly, and firefighter Trevor Holiday was the top recruit of the academy. It was a good result in a class of 20 to 30.
- The district is hosting live fire training for the Colorado Springs Fire Academy in a mutual swap site for training services.

**Staff retention**

Langmaid responded to Smith's question about staff retention, saying the district will always have competition with other fire districts and BFFRPD will lose someone in February to South Metro Fire District, Denver. Monument Fire District is adopting a massive pay increase for staff in 2023, and CSFD is implementing an increase higher than BFFRPD. BFFRPD is hiring high-caliber personnel and competes with its culture, but it will not always win out when firefighters have mouths for feed and bills to pay, and the cost of living continues to increase. At some point, a mill levy increase will be needed to maintain the 2018 decision to create a full-time professional fire service. Staff departures have slowed, but there will be a threat as long as competition exists. The staff were grossly underpaid when the district lost firefighters after two months employment. The pay at that time was comparative to the pay Hinton paid his carpenters in the 1980s, he said.

**District receives donation**

Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said the family of Walter and Imelda Evans, a married couple who joined the department in 1976 as volunteers, had both passed away several years ago, and the 13 children taking care of the estate had donated \$3,000 to the district in the couple's name.

Langmaid recommended the donation be split between both stations to enhance the quality of life for the firefighters.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

**Note:** Our *Community News* requested photos and names of the firefighters who took the oath of office at the beginning of the meeting, and has not yet received them. OCN attended via Zoom technology.

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**Monument Academy School Board, Nov. 10 and 18**

**Board adds to uniform policy, moves forward on COO hiring**

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held its regular meeting on Nov. 10 to discuss additions to its uniform and dress code policies, address carline issues, and hear board highlights. The board also held a special meeting on Nov. 18 to go into executive session to discuss the next steps toward hiring a chief operating officer (COO).

**Additions to the uniform policy and dress code**

At the Nov. 10 regular meeting, the board discussed proposed changes to the middle school uniform policy and high school dress code as requested by the East Campus Parent Teachers Organization. Items to be added included a fleece crew jacket, a track jacket, and a fleece varsity jacket similar to a letterman jacket, which would add lower-cost options that would be in stock.

Board member Joe Buczkowski asked if the varsity fleece jacket had a hood, reminding the board of the previous meetings with lengthy discussions of behavioral issues caused by hoods. He said hoodies had been removed from the uniform option due to these issues. The motion to approve the three options was withdrawn, and a new motion was made to approve the fleece crew and track jacket only so that those policies could be updated and brought forward for approval next month so that the jackets could be available sooner. The board approved the new motion unanimously and postponed the discussion of the fleece varsity jacket with a hood to a later time.

**Carline issues**

The board went into a two-hour executive session "for discussion regarding the purchase, acquisition, or lease of real property; to discuss matters required to be kept confidential by law regarding personal files and application materials for COO position, and regarding the MLO ballot measure; for specialized details of security arrangements and to discuss carline safety issues; and determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations regarding real property and contracted services."

On its return to open session, board member Emily Belisle thanked those whose disciplined adherence to MA's carline procedures make nearly 600 West Campus and 500 East Campus drop-offs and pick-ups a success. However, she said, it has come to MA's attention that a few drivers are committing traffic violations, not following procedures, and losing their tempers with staff and other drivers. It's unsafe for staff and students, and disrespectful behavior toward hard-working staff and other drivers is unacceptable. She said that making a left turn onto Highway 105 is strictly prohibited at all times, and traffic flow is only one way. For the safety of children and staff, MA will have no other recourse than to notate cars that violate carline rules and ticket or revoke carline access.

She noted that being late is not an excuse and asked parents to please budget enough time for carline into their daily routine. She asked parents for their cooperation, saying it was important to model best behavior in front of kids.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at [admin@bffire.org](mailto:admin@bffire.org) or call 719-495-4300.

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