

on apparel, and vehicle decals later. The firefighters need a name they can be proud of.

Director Jason Buckingham said it is good to see the pride and passion expressed by the firefighters tonight, and it is unusual in the fire service to see a 90% consensus.

Treasurer Tom Kelly said the organization serves the community and the residents pay for the fire services, and they should be given consideration.

Director Terri Hayes said she was opposed to the name change and asked the firefighters to consider the future and the taxpayers. The firefighters refer to themselves as "Monument," but the community knows the department as "Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District." Educating the residents if the decision is "Monument" will take years to achieve, and it cannot wait. The name change will need to happen fast, and it is a big expense for taxpayers.

Secretary Mike Smaldino said he was 100% for "Monument Fire," but it could be an uphill battle in the future when a mill levy increase or community support is needed.

Director Tom Tharnish said most residents, including those residing in the unincorporated El Paso County communities, believe they live in Monument, and there is no time like the present to rebrand and support the firefighters with an easily recognizable name change.

Vice President Roger Lance said it was important that the Wescott firefighters were included in the decision process because they are equally important to the board.

Hildebrandt said education will be important, and he requested the board approve "Monument Fire Protection District—proudly serving the Tri-Lakes area."

The board approved the name change, 7-0. The final full title of the combined district has yet to be determined.

Director of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner thanked everyone in the room for deciding on the new organizational name, and he thanked Kovacs for bringing both departments together in unison. There is no division now, and I am excited to come up with the new logo, said Bumgarner.

Kovacs said that as a people pleaser, he struggled knowing that some people may not be happy with the name change decision, but the level of humility that the firefighters have brought to the process was exceptional, and they have shown perseverance as firefighters do. Had they known the process would be upsetting to some, they would have done whatever it took to please everyone. "I do not see two separate departments now, just one organization working together seamlessly," and he applauded everyone for moving the district forward, ultimately serving the community to the best of their ability, said Kovacs.

2021 audit presentation

Certified public accountant Mike Collins of Erikson, Brown and Kloster LLC presented the 2021 audit and announced the district had received an unmodified opinion and an A+ rating. Collins noted the following:

- An increase in cash due to property tax increases (assessed property values).
- Increased revenue from impact fees for 2021.
- The capital improvements made to Station 1.
- The losses were from the disposal of capital assets (depreciating items) that were removed appropriately from the accounts during the remodel.
- The cost of communications increased mainly due to higher IT subscriptions.
- Wages increased due to wildland deployments and overtime wages.

The auditors will continue to monitor the effects of the 2022 unification process, but they cannot anticipate all the ways the merger will affect the district, said Collins.

Director of Administration Jennifer Martin thanked her team Laura Yearous and Jenny Bilbrey for their hard work during the audit process.

The board approved the 2021 audit as presented, 7-0.

Type 1 engine presentation

Kovacs said that due to the nationwide supply-chain challenges and production delays, the district was requesting approval to purchase the planned 2023 Type 1 engine in advance, for a cost of \$841,860. Kovacs confirmed the following:

- The Wildland Type 3 engine is delayed by a year and now expected in June 2023. See www.ocn.me/v21n6.htm#tlmfpd.
- The new mid-mount tower ladder truck is expected in October 2023. See www.ocn.me/v22n5.htm#tlmfpd.
- A squad vehicle is expected this summer for Station 5 (Shamrock Station/Highway 83). See www.ocn.me/v22n3.htm#tlmfpd.
- Two ambulance chassis (budgeted for 2023 and 2024) have been pre-ordered and reserved. See www.ocn.me/v22n5.htm#dwfspd.

Bumgarner said that knowing the supply-chain issues, the new 10-person (includes 2 DWFPD personnel) apparatus committee had discussed the details for equip-

ping a new Type 1 engine, and he said:

- The district engines are a "Jack of all trades" and carry equipment that is not used every call. A lighter engine could be created by removing some of the equipment, allowing for a tighter turn radius.
- Attack hose is weighty and difficult to maneuver and lowering the hose bed would be a benefit for the firefighters.
- The engine will have a 510-horsepower engine, enough torque to handle the hills within the district, but carry 250 gallons less than the current engines.
- The front-line engine will likely go to Station 4 (formerly DWFPD Station 1), currently the busiest station for calls. www.ocn.me/v22n2.htm#dwfspd.
- The Pierce Corp. has an engine in production for what would have been used as a dealer sample sales engine rotating from state to state, and it matches the design specification the committee discussed.
- The engine is scheduled to be completed in December and available to the district January/February 2023.
- The district had planned to purchase an engine in early 2023, but the current manufacturing process is taking 24 months before delivery.

Smaldino requested the sum difference between previously purchased engines and the proposed Type 1 engine, originally projected for the 2023 engine, and said Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) engines are costing about \$750,000 without all the "bells and whistles" and there has to be an end to the open checkbook at some point, the district just cannot afford to get everything.

Bumgarner said he does not know why the CSFD engines are costing less, and why the TLMFPD engine is \$250,000 more, but the chassis is reinforced to carry more water capacity and they operate with larger engines due to the varying terrain throughout the district, and those items cost more.

Kovacs said the following:

- The two current district Type 1 engines are considered the "Swiss army knives" in the industry, and it is redundant to carry the full gamut of equipment. There is a cost savings to be had with specialty resources, such as a squad or truck.
- There are safety concerns when it takes a full leg extension just to get on to the step and into the cab. During the winter months, he joined a call and had nearly fallen flat on his face onto a snow-covered lawn in part due to the lack of a sidewalk and the excessive height of the district engines.
- The district's largest, strongest firefighters are doing an overhead press to get the hoses back on the tray, it takes five people to complete the task, and the two engines are way too big for the district's needs.
- The district is not naïve to the cost of the apparatus, and the 2023 budget will be scrutinized intently to maintain fiscal responsibility, knowing the district may need to ask for a fire house, apparatus, and additional firefighters.
- The district had budgeted about \$900,000 for a replacement engine to be received in 2024.

The board approved the purchase, 7-0.

Water bore project—Fire Station 1

Kovacs said the district and the board had discussed spending \$50,000 for the design for the water bore project under Highway 105 to the Station 1 property. The property is now annexed into the Town of Monument, and the district has an obligation to use the town water through the domestic water supply system instead of the well system. See www.ocn.me/v21n7.htm#tlmfpd.

The board approved \$121,743 for the water line connection to fire district property, 7-0.

Station 1 Training Center update

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said the district is still looking at different styles and foundations for the Training Center, with the possible use of shipping containers to lower costs. There is the potential for building the training center on a 7-acre site within the Town of Monument, but until the district confirms the site, and a soil test is completed at Station 1, a price cannot be determined.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 6:33 p.m. pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes Sections 24-6-402(4)(b) with legal counsel Maureen Juran to discuss legal questions on district obligations and options under the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act (FAMLI).

When the board returned to the regular session, no action was taken.

Chief's report

Kovacs said the following:

- A Residential Assessment Rate drop in 2023 and 2024 will result in about a \$260,000 drop in revenue. At some point the district will need to advise the El Paso County Assessor that the mill levy will need to be offset to absorb the loss. See www.ocn.me/v19n12.htm#tlmfpd.

- He and Bumgarner had met with FirstNet AT&T representatives to discuss placing a cell phone tower on the Station 5 property. The rental would provide some additional revenue to the district, but it is a low priority due to the unification process. The district will revisit the proposal in December or January. See www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#dwfspd.
- The EMS division is conducting a 60-day trial on a dictation service that cleans up the medical reports to ensure no contradictory statements are made, preventing possible liability on the district. Battalion Chief of EMS Sean Pearson and EMS Coordinator Stephanie Soll already review every report, and it is time consuming. Pearson said the service runs on a phone app, and the report is dictated to the phone, and then the dictation

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