



Above: From left, Chairman Nathan Dowden administered the oath of office to firefighters Luke Morrone, John Singsheim, and Lieutenants Brandon Jones and Cody Poole. Director Chad Bhenken is seated in the background. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

BFFRPD (Cont. from 18)

he also recommended paying cash for the used ladder truck. The Capital Improvement Reserve Fund would be left with \$201,097, with the opportunity to bring the fund back up to \$655,495 when the 2023 budget is approved. In 2023 there will be more Capital Improvement Reserve Funds than needed to pay for the tender, but should the funding be needed for staffing, the bank has provided an option to finance the tender when it is received in August 2023.

Note: The board approved a two-wheel-drive Pierce Enforcer Pumper engine for \$631,544 at the April 21, 2021, meeting and a 2,000-gallon Pierce commercial cab tender for \$360,000 at the Jan. 19 meet-

ing. See www.ocn.me/v22n2.htm#bffirpd. Dowden and Hinton recommended everything be completed at Brindlee to reduce labor costs.

Director Kiersten Tarvainen asked if there was a way to price out the paint, graphics, and light package within the state to compare costs.

Langmaid said the district could use Pierce Manufacturing of Frederick, Colo., for the lighting package in 2023, but some body problems may be uncovered once the old lighting is removed. The paint and decal work may also be available in state, but the timeline could be an issue.

Director Chad Behnken asked when the ladder truck could be placed into service, given that training will be involved to bring staff up to speed.

Langmaid said the plan is for 2024, when additional development will allow for a staffing increase. There will be tremendous energy to get the ladder truck staffed as soon as possible—the opportunity to purchase the truck presented itself much sooner than expected—but the target for a fully equipped ladder truck, staffing, and training is 2024. It will take 12 additional personnel to go through a hiring process, then attend a fire academy, and the earliest date to put the ladder truck into service would be a year out, but the community cannot afford to do all that right now, said Langmaid.

Vice Chairman Jim Abendschan made a motion to proceed with the purchase of a used ladder tower truck for \$250,000, to include transportation costs of \$10,500, and the board will decide on a paint and light package later, for a total not to exceed \$350,000.

The board approved the motion, 5-0.

Communication issues prevail

Langmaid said a significant event had occurred on June 1 in a dual jurisdiction area in Colorado Springs. The call came in on the El Paso County side as a reported explosion, and it appeared to have been caused by the deployment of multiple air bags in a truck that drove away. The incident highlights the ongoing major communication issues between the City of Colorado Springs and the rest of

the county, with the city update reporting an active shooter incident. Operational security issues also occurred during the call, and the county Sheriff's Office and the Colorado Springs Police Department also struggled with the same communication issues. The Sheriff's Office also oversees district communications, said Langmaid.

Leadership kudos

Dowden said he and Tarvainen had attended an exceptional leadership conference presented by Echelon Front-Muster in Denver, and it was of extraordinary value. Kudos to Langmaid for identifying the conference training program, said Dowden.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

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 July 20 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, and minutes, visit www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, June 13

Board opts out of state medical leave act

By James Howald

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board met on May 9 to decide whether to participate in the state of Colorado's recently passed Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. The board also heard updates on the Lake Pump Station (LPS) and the Central Water Treatment Plant (CWTP). The board planned the replacement of the test equipment that measures the degree of leakage from the earthen dam at the southern end of Woodmoor Lake and discussed district infrastructure improvements required by the Monument Junction East and West developments. The board also heard operational reports.

The meeting ended with an executive session.

Board decides to wait on FAMLI act

District Manager Jessie Shaffer advised the board to take a cautious approach to implementing the FAMLI act. FAMLI is an insurance program, Shaffer said, that requires employees to pay into the program and offers up to 12 weeks of paid leave in return. If the district participates, employees could take paid leave to care for their own or a family member's health condition, to care for a new child, to arrange for a family member's military deployment, or for other reasons.



Above: The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) has installed a sound wall on three sides of the drilling site for Well 22 just south of County Line Road and east of I-25. The new well is just east of a lift station owned by the district. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Shaffer said the board could choose to opt out now but would have the choice to join later. Private employers must participate, he said, but quasi-governmental agencies such as WWSD have a choice. Shaffer said he had concerns about the fiscal durability of the program and thought premiums might go up in the future. Participation could be a tool to recruit employees, he said, adding he felt that the district's benefits are already very competitive. Shaffer also pointed out that if the district decided to participate now, but wanted to leave the program later, withdrawing a benefit could create friction with employees.

Erin Smith, the district's attorney, said the program required participants to begin paying into the program in 2023, and benefits would be available in 2024. She also pointed out that even if the district chose to opt out, individual employees could make their own decision to participate, which would require them to pay the monthly premium themselves.

Board President Brian Bush said he thought the program might act as a disincentive for employees to accumulate their own district-provided sick leave.

The board directed Shaffer to opt out of the program for the time being.

Infrastructure upgrades near completion

Shaffer and Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine told the board that two of the district's long-running capital improvement projects—the newly replaced LPS and the rebuilt CWTP—are virtually complete and are back in production. Both projects increase the district's resiliency and ability to meet peak water demands during the warmer months by allowing the LPS to convey surface water to both treatment plants and by allowing the CWTP to process surface water. Before the CWTP was upgraded, only the

South Water Treatment Plant could process surface water, creating a higher risk that water source might be unavailable during months of peak demand.

Shaffer said the LPS had been operational since June 1 and was only missing some windows and siding. The CWTP began processing surface water in early June. LaFontaine said the surface water treatment process at the CWTP was being adjusted and "dialed in" to address taste and odor issues typical of surface water. LaFontaine said he felt confident the right treatment plan would be developed and taste and odor issues would decrease as the district moves to the use of surface year-round and not just during the high-demand months.

Shaffer emphasized that the road around Woodmoor Lake would remain closed due to safety concerns until the contractor was finished at the LPS.

Dam safety equipment to be replaced

Shaffer told the board that the dam at the south end of Woodmoor Lake was inspected for safety annually and monitored for leakage monthly though the use of piezometers, which detect potential leaks by measuring the water pressure inside the dam. At the last inspection, the district was told the existing piezometers should be replaced. Shaffer said safety consultants recommended the existing 27 piezometers should be abandoned and replaced with seven new meters. Shaffer added that several of the existing meters had already been abandoned, and others were not operational due to silt. Shaffer said the existing meters were in place when the district took over the management of the lake from its previous owner and the safety consultants had advised that seven new meters were adequate.

The board directed Shaffer to pro-



Western Museum of Mining & Industry

Western Saloon Night Fundraiser

August 6 6pm

Your Ticket supports WMMI and includes:

**Dinner, Drinks & Live Entertainment
Sample local BEER, WINE & SPIRITS
Keepsake Glass & Prizes**

719-488-0880



225 North Gate Blvd **WMMI.org**