

PLBOT (Cont. from 18)

system. The 6-inch segment will limit the system's ability to meet peak demand when water is needed to fight a fire.

- Some of the pipelines in the southern part of the town are not optimally looped into the delivery system as a whole and this should be corrected. The town could choose between doing the work itself and recovering the costs from developers or requiring the developers to do the work.

Frisch and McClernan said drilling the new well, upgrading the treatment plant, and replacing the cast iron pipe would cost about \$4.7 million. Correcting the problems with looping would cost \$1.2 million if the town chose to do the work instead of requiring developers to do it.

Bass said the study was helpful and thanked Frisch and McClernan for their work.

Clean financial audit

David Green of Green & Associates, the town's auditor, gave the town a clean bill of financial health in the form of an "unmodified, clean" opinion. Green said the audit procedure examined the town's internal controls and policies using generally accepted standards. Green said the town had strengthened its internal controls over the last few years by carefully segmenting duties. That can be a challenge for a small staff, he said, adding "separation of duties is the cornerstone of internal controls."

Green said his audit showed the town's net position was \$10 million.

Stuth pointed out that Green's audit evaluated the town's budget in its current state, and does not address the question of whether it covers the needs of the town.

Three board vacancies to be filled

Collins said the town would have three board seats, each for four-year terms, on the next ballot. On the same ballot, the town would elect a mayor for a two-year term. Potential candidates can pick up application packets from town staff, and details of the process can be found

on the town's webpage here: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/administration/page/elections>.

STEP to fund parking and reservoir trail enforcement

Sergeant Lundy of the Palmer Lake Police Department told the board he had studied the enforcement of parking regulations at the reservoir trailhead since the installation of the parking kiosks and had determined that about 16% of parked cars were failing to pay the kiosk fees, leading to about \$300 to \$400 in lost revenue per week. Lundy proposed increasing the enforcement of parking regulations at the reservoir trail head and using the revenue to fund additional patrols of the reservoir trail. No additional officers would need to be hired, he said. Existing officers would do the patrolling required as overtime.

Special events permits

The board approved the following special events permits:

- National Night Out, Aug. 2 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Village Green, will include a chance for the community to meet officers of the Palmer Lake Police and Fire Department and enjoy hot dogs, music, and face and rock painting.
- Pikes Peak Library District Summer Adventure Party, Aug. 5 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Village Green adjacent to the Palmer Lake Library, will include a reading party, arts, crafts, and outdoor play.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society Chautauqua Assembly, Aug. 6 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Village Green, will include demonstrations and walking tours of historical places. Palmer Lake Fire Department and Palmer Lake Police Department personnel will attend.
- Pikes Peak Library Concert Series, Aug. 12, 19, and 26 from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Village Green, will include acoustic and large band performances.

Stuth spoke to the board about a Business Symposium sponsored by the Palmer Lake Economic Development

Group (PLEDG) scheduled for Sept. 22 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event is open to business owners who want to refresh their skills or want to open a business and will address business plans, marketing, web development, social media, financing, store design, and inventory management. There is an entrance fee that includes a light breakfast and lunch. See <https://townofpalmerlake.com> or <https://palmerlakecolorado.org> for details.

Art to be displayed

The board heard and approved two requests to use town locations to display the work of local artists to the public. The plans were the work of Deputy Town Clerk Julia Stambaugh and Lynn Roth and Dennis Book, both of the Palmer Lake Arts Council, and were coordinated with the arts pillar of the PLEDG.

The first request was for permission to install two pedestals for display of sculptures adjacent to the town's library. The sculptures to be displayed will be selected by a jury including town residents. The sculptures displayed will be changed occasionally.

The second request was to use wall space in the front of the Town Hall to display work by local artists.

Neither installation will be used to sell the art displayed but contact information for the artists will be provided.

Executive sessions

The July 14 meeting concluded with an executive session to get legal advice on a personnel matter concerning the town administrator. The July 28 meeting ended with an executive session to consider a request to rezone Lakeview Heights from R-3 to R-10,000.

The next two board meetings are scheduled for Aug. 11 and 25. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times, dates and locations of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 719-481-2953.

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Palmer Lake Board of Trustees Workshops, June 29, July 9, and July 14

Board studies Elephant Rock plan and mill levy override

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

In response to the town's financial challenges, Mayor Bill Bass and the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees have developed three potential solutions: merging the town's fire department with Monument Fire Protection District (formerly Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District) to cut costs, passing a mill levy override, and legalizing adult use cannabis sales. A separate but related issue is the board's effort to plan the future development of the Elephant Rock property, which is expected to generate much-needed tax revenue. In addition to discussion in regular meetings, the board has held a series of workshops to address these issues with the public and to hear their input.

The merger of the fire departments and the legalization of adult-use cannabis were covered in the July issue of Our Community News here: <https://ocn.me/v22n7.htm#plbot>.

On Saturday, July 9, the board held a public forum to give citizens another opportunity to provide feedback on the three revenue options. Details can be seen at <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/bc-bot/page/board-trustees-workshop-public-forum>.

At a special meeting, the board heard Elephant Rock development proposals from three hopeful development groups. At a workshop meeting, the board discussed the proposed mill levy override.

Elephant Rock draws developer interest

On June 29, three development groups presented their visions for the Elephant Rock property to the board.

Jeff Zearfoss of The Carter Payne presented The Ranch at Palmer Lake. Focused on the value of building community, Zearfoss's vision touched on art, outdoors activities, history, and dining. In the arts category he included music events, art classes by resident artists, gardening, a co-op gallery, movie nights, and live performances. Outdoor ideas included picnic areas, guided nature hikes, some led by a resident photographer, biking, and group runs on connected trails. The historical perspective included educational presentations for visitors and residents. Dining options included the Common Cup, a coffee house with light fare, and the Bread, Board and Bottle, serving sandwiches, paninis, soups,

salads, and desserts. Local's, a Colorado-centric option, would present bison, trout, and turkey specialties. Paired Faire would present a farm-to-table prix fixe menu. The Local Relic Farmhouse would pour seasonal artisanal beers. A by-the-glass wine program and cocktail service would round out the features of Zearfoss's concept.

Zearfoss estimated the sales tax generated by his vision to be \$185,000 to \$250,000 annually, with \$75,000 being donated to the Palmer Lake Economic Development Group (PLEDG). He also estimated 125 full- and part-time staff at the venue.

Richard and Lindsay Willan promoted an Old West "pioneer" village along the lines of The Flying W Ranch, The Renaissance Faire, or The North Pole that would attract eco-tourists and serve as an event center. Existing buildings and trails would be renovated and updated. A dining hall, spa, and amphitheater would be included. Trails would be used for hiking, snowshoeing and horseback riding. Local restaurants would provide catering and rotate through the dining hall. From a financial perspective, investors suggest the town lease to own portions of the property, lease free while they build, or the entire site could be subdivided with the town retaining a majority share.

Matt Dunston and Duncan Bremer proposed the Palmer Lake Festival and Event Center. They envisioned remodeling the existing buildings and adding new buildings as required. They would focus on events, weddings, business meetings, retreats, outdoor markets, festivals, and camping including RV camping. Dunston and Bremer proposed to lease the property on a "triple net basis 'as-is'" for the 10 years the town has agreed not to sell the property. They asked the board to commit to selling them the property in 2031. They said they preferred to present further financial details only in executive session after they had been selected as the developer.

At its July 14 regular board meeting, the board voted to ask all three developers to present more detailed business models, focused on revenue generation for the town on Aug. 11 at a board workshop.

Mill levy override workshop

Following its July 17 regular meeting, the board held a workshop to discuss a proposed mill levy override with residents and hear their feedback.

Bass opened the workshop with a slide that detailed the financial impact of three mill levy increases. For a house assessed at \$500,000:

- A 10% increase would mean an additional \$29 in tax monthly, for an annual total of \$348.
- A 20% increase would mean an additional \$57.92 in tax monthly, for an annual total of \$695.
- A 30% increase would mean an additional \$101.35 in tax monthly, for an annual total of \$1,216.

Trustee Glant Havenar pointed out that if a mill levy increase were approved by voters, it would have a bigger impact on commercial properties because their assessment rate is much higher than residential properties, and it could potentially discourage businesses from coming to the town.

A resident commented that if there were too many initiatives on the ballot it was likely that none of them would pass.

In response to a question from a resident about exactly how any increased revenue would be used, Town Administrator Dawn Collins answered that the town had capital improvement projects, such as vehicle purchases, that it has never had the money to fund, that the Fire and Police departments both needed additional staff, that the town needed a code enforcement officer, that there were road improvements that currently lack funding, and that the town's water infrastructure also needed maintenance.

Mayor Bill Bass said the town might need a combination of the revenue from adult-use cannabis sales and a mill levy increase.

The mill levy override workshop can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/arPv9gLO0bU?t=5206>.

Workshops are scheduled on an as-needed basis. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times, dates, and locations of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 719-481-2953.

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El Paso County Board of County Commissioners, July 19

Commissioners approve TLMFPD ambulance permits

By Marlene Brown

On July 19, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners approved the permits for two ambulances for the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. Ted Sayer,

emergency specialist for the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management, requested approval after the vehicles had passed county inspection. He noted that all required onboard supplies and equipment were

in current and full compliance. The permits are in effect Aug. 1, 2022 through July 31, 2023.

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