

equates to about nine man-hours of training every 48 hours. About 1,009 hours of training were completed in November. A small brush fire that began in the middle of a field for no apparent reason was extinguished quickly, he said.

Dowden said Fire Chief PJ Langmaid's primary focus and intent continue to be:

- Leadership development for officers and other interested staff.
- Succession planning and development for the continuity of operations and service delivery.
- Strategic planning and alignment for organizational sustainability and stability.
- Building and maintaining relationships with regional partners.
- Research and development to increase the district's capability.

Leadership training attended

Dowden thanked the staff for the professionally presented program that he and Directors Jim Abendschan, Chad Behnken and Kiersten Tarvainen had attended on Dec. 3. The all-hands leadership training provided by Echelon Front Academy and guest speaker Mind Shift "Machine" Nick Lav-

ery was a fabulous training opportunity, and it will stand the district staff in good stead, he said.

Piepenburg said the district received great feedback from the Echelon Front team and the operational staff.

Staff kudos

Hinton expressed his thanks to district vehicle mechanic Gavin Smith for saving thousands of dollars in vehicle repairs every year.

Rebitski said Smith is a blessing to the district. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 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 Wednesday, Jan. 18 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, 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.

Monument Fire District, Dec. 7

Meet and confer plus agreement extended; employee handbook revised

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Dec. 7, the board approved a meet and confer plus agreement and the 2023 employee handbook was approved with the 2022 revisions. The board also heard about the new mission, vision, and values, and received multiple updates. An executive session was held to discuss personnel matters.

Director Jason Buckingham was unable to attend.

2023-24 meet and confer plus agreement

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs requested the board approve an extension to the existing meet and confer plus agreement. He said that over the last couple of months the executive staff had been in discussion with Local 4319 regarding a transition from the meet and confer plus agreement to a collective bargaining agreement. Local 4319 had provided some revisions to the meet and confer plus agreement that included some binding arbitration language, but the district's attorney, Maureen Juran of Widner Juran LLP, had yet to review the revisions. Local 4319 President Lt. Franz Hankins agreed to an extension of the meet and confer plus agreement until April 30, 2023, said Kovacs.

The board approved the extension, 6-0.

2023 employee handbook

Kovacs said the 2023 employee handbook is lengthy, and the board had been provided an electronic copy with updates. The document was extensively revised in 2021, and this year the lion's share was changing the district name from Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District to Monument Fire District. And he noted the following changes:

- A sick pay change requiring operational staff provide a doctor's sick note up to 96 hours (previously 72 hours) and up to 40 hours for the administrative staff.
- The addition of a special events category to avoid shortfalls in staffing during community events. In negotiation with Local 4319, the special events category was created mandating every operational employee sign up for one event annually. The events include all the chipping events, the Fourth of July in downtown Monument, Fire Prevention Month in October, and any other designated events. Volunteers will receive time and a half for an event and the sign-up list will be made available in early 2023 to allow staff to plan. The goal is to transition some of the commitments to the new fire technician position and remove the commitment category in a future revision. The board approved the 2023 employee handbook, 6-0.

Mission, vision, and values change

Kovacs said that with the consolidation of the two fire districts, it was a good time to establish a new set of principles. A committee was formed to estab-

lish a new set of organizational principles to define the new combined fire district. The committee established a new mission and vision statement as well as the new values of character, connection, and commitment. The new mission and vision statement is far less cumbersome than the previous statement, and in addition to a declaration of trust, describes how the employees will treat each other and the community, said Kovacs.

Note: The new Monument Fire District Organizational Mission, Vision and Values document can be found at www.tlmfire.org.

Station 1 training center update

Kovacs said the district continues to evaluate all the options with regard to the best location for the district training center. The district owns 14 acres adjacent to Station 1, and the property at the Town of Monument Public Works Department will likely be too small. A conversation with a land developer was scheduled for Dec. 8 to discuss land availability at the southwest corner of the district (at an intersection near Terrazzo Road and Woodcarver Road). About 2 acres would be needed for a future Station 6, and about 5 acres for a training center site. If enough property can be secured, a training tower could also be included. Building a training center in a commercial area would be preferable, helping to maintain good neighbor relations by avoiding a site next to the residential area at Station 1, he said.

Staff departure

Kovacs informed the board that Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich had taken a position at the Security Fire Department. The district will request board consideration in 2023 to redirect funds toward an education position. The district does not plan on filling the vacant administrative assistant position. See DWFPD article on page 18.

Executive session—fire chief annual review

The board moved into executive session at 7:15 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4)(f), to review the fire chief's annual performance.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 25 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.

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

Support Our Community. Shop Tri-Lakes and Black Forest!

Monument Dance Classes Ages 3 & up
Tap Ballet Hip-hop Musical Theatre Contemporary
atimetodancecolorado.com
719.232.5313

FIRST CLASS FREE



Woodmoor Handyman
Remodels • Electrical • Plumbing
No job too small
Call for an estimate today!
(719) 640-5751 (office)
(719) 650-7252 (cell)
1-719-568-2957 (cell)



Specializing in Residential Cleaning *A Gift of Time*
Overwhelmed?
Want your home spic and span?
Call Stacy today!
(719) 930-2178
www.agiftoftime.us
Weekly • Bi-weekly • Monthly • Move-outs • Move-ins.



ELIZABETH BRYSON INSURANCE GROUP
Medicare help now available!



Have this card?

Give me a call today, and I will help you understand Medicare and the options available.



Elizabeth Bryson
719-418-9350
325 2nd Street #M,
Monument, CO 80132
www.ebinsurancegroup.com

We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.

HAPPY 2023!
FROM THE STAFF AT

FACINELLI MOTORS

QUALITY AUTO REPAIR
SUBARU • HONDA • TOYOTA
CALL TODAY 488-6729
706 Westward Lane
Palmer Lake

