

the Palmer Lake intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for ambulance services.

Secretary Jason Buckingham and Director Randall Estes were excused on June 28, with Director Tom Tharnish absent. Vice President John Hildebrandt attended via telephone.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Director of Administration Jennifer Martin were absent for the June 28 board meeting.

All directors were in attendance on July 26, with President Mike Smaldino and Director Tom Tharnish attending via Zoom.

Battalion Chief Mike Dooley retires



Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said Battalion Chief Mike Dooley had retired from the fire service after serving 40 years. Dooley plans to be a part of the department's history group to preserve the culture of the past. He served 30 years beginning with 10 years of volunteer firefighter service, Bradley said.

Smaldino thanked Dooley for his service.

Director Roger Lance said Dooley showed a lot of leadership, looking out for his crew, he made a difference within the department and the district, and he will be missed.

Mount Herman Road fire

Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner said a fire occurred on July 25 at around 6 a.m. about a mile south of Mount Herman Road from where the road forks with Red Rocks Drive. The mitigation efforts made over the past couple of years in

the area, removing scrub oak and thinning the pine canopy is definitely helpful, and the USDA Forest Service staff has plans to continue those mitigation efforts in the area, he said. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the district is glad to be taking part in the recently formed regional Type 6 Wildland Fire Strike Team. The goal of the team is to be on the road in 90 seconds; historically teams have responded in 45 minutes. If requested, the team could have been called to the Mount Herman fire. MFD sent two brush truck units, and Battalion Chief Micah Coyle noted the flames were visible from Highway 83 and Hodgen Road, he said.

2022 audit presentation

Mitchell Downs, partner at Erikson Brown and Kloster P.C., said he was the auditor in charge and performed the risk assessment. He instructed the directors on how to read the audit and informed the board that another amendment to the 2022 budget was necessary. This was because the district spent \$107,390 over budget after ordering two fire trucks that were placed on lease-purchase agreements. The trucks were on the balance sheet as an asset, but when the audit occurs, those assets are moved to expenses. Budgets are amended all the time and it is not a concern, he said. The district did not purposely overspend and the State Auditor's Office confirms it is acceptable to go back and amend the budget. The district's attorney, Linda Glesne, was notified and will issue a notice to amend the budget and approve the audit in the regular month of July, he said.

Shani Cottrell, CPA, said she focused on the IGA with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD). Everything looked really clean and the transactions were recorded correctly, to include the files for the employee transfers. The books for both districts mirror exactly, and no adjustments were needed for the lease-purchase agreements. Three journal adjustment entries were made, one at the request of the district to add all the fixed assets from DWFPD. The executive staff was very helpful during the audit, she said.

Downs said less than five journal entries is normal and equates to a clean audit. It is very rare that nothing needs to be tweaked and the board can rely on the financial statements, he said.

Smaldino asked if the district can avoid an amendment again.

Bumgarner said the district is working with the contract accountants to understand how to alleviate the problem.

Hildebrandt said that in the past

the district violated Colorado law by overspending the budget, and it was quite a while ago, but he was always happy as treasurer to receive a statement saying the district did not violate the law and were within the parameters. The district is within the parameters although technically the district did violate the law, but the tower ladder engine asset has not been built yet, he said.

Note: The district purchased a stock engine for Station 4 and made a down payment to place the order for the tower ladder truck to be built in December 2022.

Lance said the district is saving money by purchasing in advance.

The district will be back within the parameters of the law after the budget is amended next month, said Bumgarner.

The board unanimously approved the 2022 audit on July 28.

Note: After a public hearing on the 2022 amended budget at the July meeting, the board approved resolution 2023-04 amending the 2022 budget to reflect increased expenditures and made a supplemental appropriation of additional sums of money to defray expenses, including the costs of additional capital expenditures for a total of \$107,390.

The board unanimously approved and adopted the amended 2022 budget.

Meet and confer plus agreement extension

Bradley said the board had extended the meet and confer plus agreement with Local 4319 a couple of times this year. The relationship was working well and a decision had been reached to extend the agreement to buy some time until after the merger is completed.

Local 4319 President/Firefighter Christian Schmidt said the union supports the meet and confer plus agreement extension through Dec. 31, 2025. The agreement does not have a strike and lock-out provision.

The board approved the extension, 4-0.

Kovacs said legal counsel confirmed that all previous language preventing firefighter strikes due to collaborative working agreements still holds.

Palmer Lake Inter-governmental agreement

Kovacs said the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) would be discussing the revised IGA to provide EMS between MFD and Palmer Lake residents at the PLBOT board meeting on July 27. Glesne agreed with the revised document, with a recalculated fee structure, and only upon request by a Palmer Lake firefighter. Palmer Lake will be invoiced for additional calls beyond the number agreed upon in the IGA and be reimbursed if calls do not reach the agreed amount. A charge of \$575 per call will cover the ambulance and staffing, and the patient will be billed independently, as the district does for its residents. American Medical Response (AMR) will still be the primary responder for Palmer Lake, he said. See PLBOT article on page 9.

Bradley said AMR responds to about 350 calls for service to Palmer Lake per year, and typically the district responds to about 15 calls per year.

The board unanimously approved the revised IGA.

F550 chassis purchase

Bradley said the district has been switching vendors to find chassis for ambulances, but it can now purchase a 2023 Ford F550 chassis for \$69,360 and avoid an 18-month waiting list. The chassis was originally allocated to another department, and the district is budgeting for a Type 6 (brush truck) in 2024. He requested the board consider approving the purchase and in 2024 the district would need to pay only for the truck build, he said.

Bumgarner said Environmental

Protection Agency standards are about to change for fire engines, and new orders now take 30 months to build, with tenders estimated at 18 months before delivery. Purchasing the chassis ahead will allow the manufacturer to build the apparatus in six months and avoid increasing costs, he said.

Kovacs said the district is in the third year of waiting for the Type 3 apparatus, ordered mid-2021 and budgeted for 2022, with an expected delivery sometime in December.

The board unanimously approved the purchase.

Training center and facilities update

Bumgarner said OZ Architects is working on the designs for the ultimate training center to be developed in phases. The redesigns for Stations 2, 4, and 5 are estimated to cost about \$82,928. The design for the new Station 3 will be an additional fee, he said.

Kovacs said the Station 4 (Gleneagle Drive) will require sprinklers in the living areas, and that will add an expense to the remodel project. The district is still negotiating a land purchase for the Station 3 relocation, and in talks with the land owner of the Falcon Commerce Center for a potential future Station 6.

Buckingham asked about coverage for the increase in homes on the southwest side of Monument.

Kovacs said Station 4 covers that area, but as commercial development increases on the west side of I-25, coverage will need to be reassessed.

Financial report for June

Treasurer Tom Kelly said the district is at 50% of the budgeted amount and everything is tracking except impact fees that are about 23.7% of the predicted budget. Revenue is about \$10 million and 60.9% of the projected annual budget of about \$16.5 million. Expenses are within the normal range except the assisted benefits at 60% based upon not receiving the original estimates before approving the budget and adding vehicles to the fleet. Overall expenses year to date are about \$7.1 million, about 50.7% of the projected annual budget of about \$14 million, he said.

Martin said the district had made the first payment for the assisted benefits in December and seven months had been paid year to date.

The board accepted the June financial report as presented 7-0. Note: Financial reports, the chief's report, and minutes can be found at www.monumentfire.org.

Technology request

Kovacs said that because some board directors attend the meetings virtually, discussions had taken place to purchase laptops or tablets to access board packets virtually. The district would own the devices and provide IT support, and hard copies could still be provided to directors. Information could also be shared in real time with the board directors.

Hildebrandt said having an additional device to review documents during meetings would be useful when attending remotely.

Kovacs said the staff would investigate the cost for the technology and present to the board at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m. on June 28 and at 7:57 p.m. on July 26.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 23 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Fire Protection District, July 19 Virtual meeting unavailable

By Natalie Barszcz

An article on the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) board meeting for this edition was not possible because this reporter was unable to join the meeting via Zoom due to a password availability issue. After reaching out to the BFFRPD staff to request a password to join the meeting, a response was received the following morning stating, "The administrative staff would try to ensure future Zoom meetings are not password protected."

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, Aug. 16 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Director of Public Relations Brooke Reid at admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

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