would fill two vacancies and is normally conducted by the vice president. Since Clinton is running for re-election, she has a conflict, so the board voted to

appoint Ross to conduct the election.

The MA School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 11, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at https://bit. ly/ma-boe.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

PALMER LAKE (Cont. from 1)

Board supports Krob; retains his firm

Mayor Glant Havenar opened the special meeting on Dec. 21 with a call for public comments.

Resident Bill Bass, who served a term as mayor from 2021 until 2023, addressed Krob's service to the town, pointing out that the board should not be swayed by hearsay and rumor. "This matter would never have come to light in the way it has had it not been for one person ... probably 90 percent of the complaints from this party have been incorrect and frivolous, mean-spirited ... accusations that were outright lies that damage the town and people. It should stop." Bass said he supported Krob and his family, adding that Krob's advice had benefitted his administration as well as Havenar's.

Resident Bob Radosevich, who has served the town in many capacities over several administrations, also spoke in support of Krob, pointing out that no harm had been done to the town.

Havenar thanked Bass and Radosevich for their comments and opened an executive session. When the board reconvened to open session, Havenar read a letter to the board from Krob in which he said: "In light of the recent media and social media coverage relating to a personal matter that I am vehemently defending, I have decided to take a step back from representing the town until my personal case is resolved. In the meantime, our firm will assign another attorney to serve as the town attorney with significant experience representing municipalities."

Havenar made a statement on behalf of the board expressing full support for Krob and for the representation of his firm. She said the board looked forward to his return.

2024 budget adopted

Havenar opened a budget workshop on Nov. 29 and said recent social media posts claiming the proposed 2024 budget "defunded" the police were incorrect. She pointed out the budget was balanced and asked for the support of the town.

Town Administrator Dawn Collins said progress was being made in how the town handles the budgeting process, with more involvement from department heads. The proposed budget reduces worker compensation premiums. Collins stressed that property assessments were delayed due to a special session of the state Legislature held following the failure of Proposition HH, and the proposed budget would need to be amended when those assessments were finally available. She said the budget provided a 5% salary increase for the Police Department; other departments would receive smaller increases. The budget included funding for a compensation analysis to provide an objective opinion for future planning.

Havenar said she was concerned about the Police Department getting a larger increase than other departments. Trustee Kevin Dreher expressed the same con-

The board packet provided for the workshop (https://www. townofpalmerlake.com/meetings) contains additional details about the proposed budget. In previous budget discussions, the board prioritized roadway and drainage improvements and water infrastructure. The Water Fund budget has \$500,000 for capital improvement projects. It is over \$90,000 in the black.

The proposed budget adds these new staff positions:

- A full-time deputy clerk in Town Administration.
- A full-time equipment operator in the Public Works department.
- A part-time code enforcement officer in Town Administration (code enforcement is currently handled by the Police Department).
- A part-time records technician for the Police Department.

The proposed budget makes the following reductions:

- Removes one part-time Town Administration staff member.
- Reduces part-time Police De-
- partment hours. Reduces part-time Fire Depart-
- ment hours.
- Removes one part-time Public Works/Parks Department staff member.
- Reduces capital improvement funding for roads.

At the Dec. 14 regular board meeting, the board continued its work on the budget with the consideration of Ordinance 26-2023, an emergency ordinance to adopt the budget.

Attorney Krob told the board that, although final property assessments were not yet available, he recommended that the budget be adopted at that meeting. He said the board would need to amend the mill levy portion of the budget when the final property value assessments were determined by the state. He warned that if the board did not adopt a budget by the end of the year, it would trigger a requirement for the state to impose a budget on the town that would include 10% across-the-board reductions in all line items. He explained an emergency ordinance to adopt the budget would take effect immediately, whereas an ordinary ordinance would take effect in 30 days, after the end of the year, triggering a budget to be imposed by the state.

The board voted unanimously in favor of Emergency Ordinance 26-2023, which adopted the 2024 budget effective Dec. 14. The board also scheduled a special session for Jan. 3 to amend the 2024 budget in light of the final property value assessment and its impact on the town's mill levy.

Liquor license transferred

The board met as the Local Licensing Authority on Dec. 14 to hold a public hearing on the transfer of a liquor license. Justin T. Cline told the board he was opening Sundance Pit BBQ at 25 Highway 105, which previously had been La Rosa Southwestern Dining. He asked the board to transfer the liquor license owned by La Rosa to his business. Collins confirmed that Cline's application was complete. There were no comments from the public and the board approved the transfer.

Conditional use permit for church granted

At its Dec. 14 meeting, the board held a public hearing to consider a request from Jeff Maddox of the Movement Church for a permit to use the building at 304 Highway 105, commonly called the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts, as a church with services on Sunday morning. Maddox said properties in Convenience Commercial zones can be used as religious institutions if permitted by the board.

The Planning Commission approved the conditional use on a 3-2 vote on Nov. 15, with the requirement to complete inspections by the Fire Department and Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD) and to resolve any violations.

Resident Roger Mosely argued the board should not grant permission to Maddox since Maddox is not the owner of the property. Mosely predicted problems with PPRBD if the permit were approved.

Krob asked Maddox if he was aware the building was not zoned for residential use and Maddox answered yes. Krob said permitting use as a church would not include residential use. He added Maddox would need to resolve any viola-



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