

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, July 11

June meeting held after postponement for wildfire

By Jim Kendrick

The regular district board meeting began at 7:15 p.m. July 11 because of a pension board meeting on the same night.

This meeting was originally scheduled for June 27 but was postponed because of the Waldo Canyon Fire.

Assistant Chief Scott Ridings was on vacation.

Chief Vinny Burns noted an expected extra expense of about \$35,000 over the amount budgeted for Fire Station 2 on Highway 83. About \$23,000 remains in the capital fund for the station to pay for the remaining extra cost. The board unanimously approved a motion to accept the May financial report as presented.

Burns said that the total number of runs through May were 30 percent higher than in 2011. The district's summer safety fair attracted about 300 people, due in part to the good weather and excellent support from all those from other agencies, charities, and fire entities invited to participate in Wescott's event. Engine 2 deployed for two weeks for a wildfire in New Mexico and a week of training at the Air Force Academy.

Wescott deployed an engine to the Waldo Canyon Fire in the first hour to Division Bravo, along Highway 24 from Manitou Springs to the top of Chipita Park. It remained deployed and fully engaged through July 2 to prevent the fire from jumping across Highway 24.

Board President Scott Campbell made extensive remarks on how well all the 1,300 firefighters performed and how much was achieved despite the unbelievably horrible and dangerous conditions. Burns echoed Campbell and emphasized lessons learned regarding teamwork with local area fire districts and the Air Force Academy during very unpredictable weather conditions and fire behavior. Several district firefighters then briefed the board on the highlights of their individual participation in fighting the fire—several very interesting “war stories.”

Burns noted that firefighter Valery Marshall is about to complete all her paramedic training and should be promoted in the next two months.

Fire Marshal Margo Humes said she is now being inundated with requests from homeowners wanting Firewise inspections of their properties. She said that she would be educating district constituents on the ready-set-go program. For more information, see <http://wildlandfirersg.org/learn/index.cfm?navItemNumber=500>.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Pension Board, July 11

Pension fund remains sound

By Jim Kendrick

At the July 11 meeting of the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Pension Board, figures showed that the pension fund was financially sound.

The pension board is composed of the district board and two volunteer firefighters.

Volunteer firefighters Lt. Bryan Ackerman and Lt. Tim Hampton presented the 2012 first-quarter Wescott volunteer pension fund report. The net balance in the fund increased by \$42,659 to \$881,820 in the first quarter.

The fund remains solvent even though there was a very slight increase in benefits paid each quarter—\$8,550 in the first quarter of 2012. The district plans to again contribute \$6,000 to the fund in the fourth quarter as in 2011. Administrative fees over the past four years average about 0.22 percent.

Director Harland Baker was absent from the meeting.

The recent free biennial state actuarial study of the pension fund also shows that the fund is actuarially sound. The district has aggressively sought 90 percent matching

funds from the state when available to maximize deposits to the pension fund, and it has paid off. The fund is 68 percent overfunded for current benefits.

The pension board unanimously approved the following changes for 2013 to realign Wescott's current benefits to the maximum amounts allowed by state law:

- Increase the basic payment for a 20-year volunteer pension from \$300 to \$400 per month.
- Increase the additional monthly payment for each full year over 20 years of service from \$15 to \$20 per month.
- Increase the disability benefit for a line-of-duty injury from \$150 to \$225 per month.
- Increase the long-term disability benefit for a line-of-duty injury from zero to \$450 per month.
- Increase the survivor benefit for a line-of-duty death from \$150 to \$225 per month.
- Increase the survivor benefit for a death after a normal retirement from \$150 to \$200 per month.
- Increase the survivor benefit for a death after a disability from a line-of-duty injury from zero to \$225 per month.
- Increase the lump-sum death funeral benefit from \$100 to \$800.

Even with these increased benefits, the actuarial study shows the fund will remain overfunded by \$37,000 if the district continues to contribute \$6,000 per year. The board unanimously approved continuation of the \$6,000 annual contribution to the fund in the fourth quarter.

The board adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

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