

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Nov. 19

## Board discusses 2016 budget, seeks advisory committee members

By Lisa Hatfield

The Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board held a hearing for amending the 2015 budget and dis-

cussed the 2016 proposed budget, which will be approved at the Dec. 8 meeting.

The November meeting was held Nov. 19 after snow on Nov. 17 postponed the meeting. The district did not have a board meeting in October due to lack of quorum. Director Bill Ingram was absent.

### 2015 amendment and 2016 draft budget

No members of the public spoke during the public hearing about the 2015 amended budget or the 2016 draft budget.

The directors unanimously approved the 2015 amended budget, which involved changes due to the early receipt of grant money for new Lifepack defibrillators that cost \$30,000 apiece.

The 2016 budget synopsis estimated about \$5.9 million in revenue, an estimated increase of 8.1 percent, and about \$6.0 million in expenses, an estimated increase of 8.8 percent. Chief Chris Truty has been presenting information to the directors all year about projected changes in the budget for 2016 and beyond. Go to [www.ocn.me](http://www.ocn.me) and search "TLMFPD" for all the background, or contact TLMFPD with ques-



Above: Chief Chris Truty is shown here with the four men who graduated from the Tri-Lakes Monument firefighter academy on Nov. 20. Photo courtesy of Chris Riggs.

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tions about the details.

### Citizens advisory committee seeks members

Truty said that TLMFPD is seeking 15 to 20 residents who would be willing to meet monthly to assist in providing long-term direction for the district. He would like to discuss the possibility of some kind of mill levy vote for the district in 2016 since Monument is experiencing rapid population growth, and since the community is at risk for wildfire because it borders the "wildland urban interface." Long-term funding to stabilize existing services would require an additional \$20 million over the next five years, Truty said. He asked interested community members to call him at 719-648-4148 or write to [ctruty@tlmfire.org](mailto:ctruty@tlmfire.org).

### Refinancing district debt

The directors approved two resolutions to move two vehicle loans from Zion Bank and Wells Fargo to Peoples National Bank. The move should save the district about \$162,000 over five years. Truty said Colorado law requires a vote of the board since even though the net impact on the district would be reduced, new debt is being issued.

### Levy vote consultant discussed

Chief Chris Truty explained that at the August meeting, the board had approved contracting with the finance company, George K. Baum, to assist the district with evaluating the possibility of a 2016 public levy vote.

He said in the course of the development of the contract, when attempting to incorporate two promised terms into the contract, the company informed him that it could not wrap the cost of George K. Baum's services into the cost of the bond, nor could it charge zero fee if it recommended a levy vote that turned out to be unsuccessful. Because of the changes, the company offered to discount its fee from \$25,000 to \$19,000.

The board consensus was that before moving forward with the contract, they would like to hear a direct explanation from a representative of George K. Baum.

### Financial report

Treasurer John Hildebrandt said October represents 83.33 percent of the year, and overall expenses were 0.72 percent under budget. Revenues were on track or ahead of projections except for ambulance revenues, which were at 73 percent of budget as of the end of October. His report was approved unanimously.

Truty and Office Administrator Jennifer Martin said the new ambulance billing company, Fire Rescue EMS, was working on catching up with billing that was lost by the previous company.

### Firefighter academy

Truty and Deputy Chief Randy Trost said the district's focus in the last month has been the firefighter academy from which four people graduated on Nov. 20. More than half the district's staff members contributed to the operational training and instruction and updating the recruit manual. Trost said, "They have donated more hours than what they got paid for.... I can't thank the group enough. Great collective effort by the crews." He said the academy taught graduates about real-life job experience instead of "online learning with Saturday skills."

### Blizzard disaster scenario planned

Truty said that El Paso County was planning a field disaster exercise for Jan. 9, "probably ratcheting it up a notch" compared to the Nov. 17 blizzard that hit the area. The simulation is designed as a test of the county's emergency management pro-



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