

an additional \$200 million for education.

The forecast for the state is stronger employment and housing.

Wangeman said that the goals of the Board include improved technology, improved communication and a number of capital improvements to include water systems, roadwork, windows, a cooling tower at Lewis-Palmer High School, and the purchase of additional busses.

Nutritional Services continues to be profitable despite going off of federal funding for the high schools.

### Special Recognitions

Lewis-Palmer High School Principal Sandi Brandl introduced women's volleyball coach Susan Odenbaugh and team members Alexa Smith and Mariah Evans. Odenbaugh has been selected as MaxPreps Coach of the year as well as Gazette Coach of the Year. Alexa has been named MaxPreps Player of the Year in addition to several other awards and Mariah has been named to the MaxPreps Underclass All-American Girls Volleyball Team and was a finalist for PrepVolleyball.com Player of the Year.

The Lewis-Palmer High School poms dance team

was recognized as having the highest combined grade point average of any team in its division by the Colorado High School Activities Association. The girls' average GPA is 3.6.

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The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the district's learning center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on February 19.

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### Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Jan. 20

## Station 3 appraised higher than two purchase offers

By Nancy Wilkins

At the Jan. 20 Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meeting, Directors Greg Gent, Joyce Hartung, Bo McAllister, and John Fredell received a formal appraisal of Station 3, heard the 2014 year-end report from Assistant Chief Scott Ridings, approved the meeting minutes and financial reports for November and December, and went into executive session to discuss the possibility of selling Station 3.

### Station 3 appraised more than \$120,000 from highest offer

After receiving two offers to purchase Station 3, the board decided at the Dec. 2 board meeting to acquire a formal appraisal of the building and property. Certified General Appraiser Andrew D. Link took three comparative property values from homes sold in 2014, each located within one-half mile from the station. The appraised value for Station 3 was more than \$200,000, well above the two offers of \$81,700 and \$40,000 presented to the board in December.

Station 3 is located at 15000 Sun Hills Drive. The building has two separate garages, the largest of which is about 1,400 square feet. The floor plan sketch also shows an upstairs meeting room measuring about 20 by 20 feet. The board is expected to continue discussing selling Station 3 at the next meeting.

### Calls increased 6 percent in 2014

Assistant Chief Ridings presented the board with the 2014

year-end report listing 2,213 calls in 2014, a 6 percent increase over the 2,087 calls in 2013. Fire Chief Vinny Burns and Ridings said that as the age and population of district residents increase, the number of medical calls increase.

The report shows the total number of calls made in 2014 by each day of the week. Monday was the highest call day with 362 calls. There were 340 calls on Tuesday, 347 on Wednesday, 298 on Thursday, 334 on Friday, 294 on Saturday, and 238 on Sunday.

According to the year-end report, the majority of calls were for emergency medical services. Another 117 EMS calls included vehicle accidents, seven calls included a motor vehicle accident with a pedestrian, and 28 calls were for carbon monoxide detector alarms. The report also showed two lighting strikes without fire and one severe weather or natural disaster standby.

When an emergency call comes in, the district knows if the location has fire hydrants, so before the firefighters leave the station they can add the right equipment to the emergency vehicles, Riding said. A copy of the report with more detailed information should be available at the office.

### Financial report

Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich presented the bank balances for November and December. November balances show Peoples National Bank, \$38,862; PNP Colorado Peak Fund, \$180,109; Colorado Trust, \$439,409,

and Wells Fargo Public Trust, \$587,702.

December balances show Peoples National Bank, \$37,385; PNP Colorado Peak Fund, \$180,124; Colorado Trust, \$439,411; and Wells Fargo Public Trust, \$425,737. Popovich said the district should expect an additional \$50,000 from unused funds from 2014 to carry forward to 2015.

### Lieutenants from the Sheriff's Office visit Wescott

Chief Burns said Wescott recently received visitors from Sheriff Bill Elder's office. Burns said the welcomed visit was a significant improvement in communication "in only two weeks." Elder recently became the new sheriff for El Paso County, taking the oath of office in January. The two departments can share dispatch information.

The board went into executive session, with Gent citing Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402 (4) (a). to discuss selling Station 3. According to Popovich, the meeting ended after the executive session at about 8:33 p.m. with continued plans to sell Station 3.

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The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors' next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Feb. 17 at 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Please call 488-8680, a non-emergency number, for more information, or visit [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org). The district is also on Facebook.

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### Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Jan. 28

## New personnel policy authority approved

By Lisa Hatfield

At the first meeting in its new location at the Monument Town Hall on Jan. 28, the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board approved the use of a new online policy authority and discussed a related proposed change to policy on organizational structure and communications.

### Policy authority approved

Monument Fire Chief Chris Truty proposed the use of a more dynamic policy authority manual to replace the existing personnel manual, last approved in 2011, that was in the process of being updated when he arrived in May 2013. Truty said that a single document like the existing one cannot keep up with an organization like TLMFPD that is undergoing change regularly.

Something like Lexipol, which is a subscription provider of state-specific policies and verifiable policy training for public safety organizations, will be used instead. It provides individual policy templates for the district to use and eventually customize after being reviewed by staff.

Also, currently, the chief was "effectively prohibited from making any formal changes to the organization without the board's approval." He asked the board to expand policy change approval authority to include the fire chief on those policies that are related to operations.

Truty noted on a list of about 170 Lexipol policies which ones might be changed only with board approval, chief's approval, or with a combination of those with input from staff. A lengthy discussion resulted in which the board, the chief, and the union asked who had the ultimate authority to make a decision whenever a disagreement arose. It circled back to the Policy 300 discussion (below) that was not voted on at this meeting but will be revisited in February.

The district's union representatives clearly stated their viewpoint regarding the proposed changes. Firefighter Mike Keough, vice president of Local 4319 of the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) union, said that instead of an online document that could change more frequently, they preferred having a black-and-white document they could refer

to as needed when they had an on-the-job question without wondering "what the district policy was today."

Franz Hankins, union president, said the union needed to have input about changes concerning wages, working conditions, benefits, and health and safety issues. The union would want mediation from the board when there is disagreement between the operational chain of command and the union firefighters or staff.

The consensus of the board and Truty was that the Lexipol items, which are written from a "best practices standpoint," still needed to be reviewed from their boilerplate form to be customized for use in TLMFPD and this would take up to two years, but that the policy was a good starting place.

Secretary Mike Smaldino suggested some changes to Truty's list of when the board, the staff, and the union would provide official input to any changes in a policy. The board unanimously approved the adoption of the new policy authority including those changes.

### Organizational structure and communications

In a closely-related topic that was discussed but not voted on, Policy 300, Truty recommended the creation of a subcommittee to provide an alternate channel of communication for when disagreements arise within the district between the operational chain of command and the staff.

Truty's memo stated, "It is widely accepted by district staff that two of the factors that contributed to the district's need for leadership change was the abuse of authority and a failure of the chain-of-command. Past discussion at district board meetings has been about preventing these failures from occurring again, especially if the failure is at the district's highest leadership levels. Assuring staff that leadership at all levels, including the board, is committed to solid organizational leadership, appropriate authority, and healthy chain-of-command is a primary message that is regularly sent to staff."

The board consensus was that the preferred course of action was that staff would talk to the chief first when there was a problem. But in times of disagreement, the proposed subcom-

mittee would allow for communication between staff and the board of directors directly. It would consist of two members of the Board of Directors, two TLMFPD IAFF 4319 members, and one non-union member. Otherwise, staff members are not supposed to initiate contact with the board without having first informed the chief.

The board and the union planned to discuss the policy again at the next meeting.

### Chief's report

Truty informed the directors that revenues were \$350,000 over what had been budgeted in 2014 due to increased specific ownership taxes. He asked the board for direction on how to allocate the serendipitous funds. After some discussion, the consensus was to finish paying for extra vacation time that had been accrued by staff (a statutory requirement), increase the fund balance for the emergency operation of the district from 53 days to 60 days, and move up the new or re-chassied ambulance purchase by one year.

Fire Marshal John Vincent discussed home sprinkler systems and home insurance companies.

Truty said that the recent weeklong academy to train two temporary firefighters used a template made by Keough that worked well and will be used again for new hires in the future.

The new EMS fee plan agreed upon by Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department Chief Margo Humes and Truty is going well, and the relationship between PLFVD and TLMFPD is very positive, Truty said.

### Financial report

Treasurer John Hildebrandt's report included the district's bank statements as of Dec. 31 showing an account balance of \$2.19 million in five separate accounts.

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The next meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 25 in the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Meetings are usually held the fourth Wednesday of each month. For information, contact Jennifer Martin at 719-484-0911.

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