

The current account yields .01 percent interest on the balance, which earns the station \$1.94 a month. The board will look into other accounts with more earning potential, but that fit within the confines of Colo-

rado statutes. February's financial statement was postponed until April. The statement is typically not ready until after the date of the scheduled directors meeting in March.

The board is scheduled to go over both the February and March financial statements at the April Board of Directors meeting.

After a unanimous decision to adjourn, the Board of Directors

meeting ended at 7:28 p.m.

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors' next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. April 21 at 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Please call 488-

8680, a non-emergency number, for more information, or visit www.wescottfire.org. The district is also on Facebook.

Jennifer Green-Lan- choney can be contacted at Jenlanchoney@ocn.me.

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, March 25

District priorities discussion for 2016 begins

By Lisa Hatfield

Chief Chris Truty and the directors discussed the priorities and philosophies of the district at the March 25 meeting of the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD). Truty envisions more long-range, proactive planning and budgeting for the district, and over the coming months, he will be asking the board, which represents the residents of the district, for guidance on their priorities so that financial and other decisions will be made with purpose instead of arbitrarily.

The directors also reached a consensus on how to allocate \$350,000 of surplus funds from 2014.

Secretary Mike Smaldino was absent.

Services, personnel and infrastructure first topics of 2016 budget discussion

Truty asked the board to start discussion of the 2016 budget so that by the end of summer, the board will know whether or not it wishes to put a mill levy question on the ballot in November. He asked them to define their philosophy of budgeting—if the district wants to have debt and take out loans or if it wants to regularly set aside money for planned vehicle and infrastructure replacements five to 10 years in the future, and how to invest in personnel development and wages. He wanted the board to define its priorities, saying “Otherwise (all the decisions we make are) arbitrary, and we would rather be all on the same page.”

He said the district's mission statement defines its direction. It is “to minimize the loss of life and property resulting from fires, medical emergencies, environmental and other disasters.” Truty's goal for this discussion, “among the identification of service provision and the supporting infrastructure, would be to attempt to make a decision that would not make another mill levy increase necessary for at least five years,” the memo read.

Truty mentioned that while expenses each year are somewhat predictable, revenues go up and down and it would be important to structure any possible mill levy to absorb the uncertainty. Changes antici-

pated for the future include potentially hundreds (even over 1,000) more homes being built in the district, possible mergers with other fire districts, and possible new fire stations being needed.

This first month's discussion topics included services provided, personnel investment, and infrastructure quality:

On the topics of services to provide and personnel investment, Truty said there are 85 core competencies expected of professional fire departments, and while actual accreditation at nationally recognized standards is resource-intensive, that model could be used as a goal for the next three to five years. The board agreed that aiming toward being a standards-based organization would be a good direction.

The consensus was that the goal would be to achieve services and staffing goals meeting national standards and “above average” salary goals to retain quality people, and it might turn out that having those dual goals would build the case for putting a mill levy question to district residents in the fall. Truty said that in addition to meeting national staffing standards, his goal was “to get our employees up to average wage or above-average wage, show them we value and encourage them.”

Treasurer John Hildebrandt said it was important to educate the public that there are professional standards the district is trying to attain.

Regarding services provided by the district, the board considered the need for an additional tactical team to provide wildland fire preparation, mitigation, and enhanced response (wildland, special rescue, etc.) Truty said the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District had a good model for this type of work, including public education and also using firefighter volunteers and district equipment to help residents do mitigation work on their properties.

Another area of consideration was special tactics response (hazardous materials, technical rescue, and confined space). The directors were concerned about the current lack of ability to respond to a

submerged victim in a water rescue, for example.

Hildebrandt suggested combining objectives could help. For example, the district could combine a potential contracted non-emergency medical response (such as ambulance transfers, or working in conjunction with insurance companies to do follow-up visits to patients discharged from hospital) with a public education mission using an extra vehicle that is “out in the field already” and would not take away from emergency response resources.

Public education is currently delegated to Fire Marshal John Vincent, “who has 75 things he is responsible for doing, and he can only get to the top six,” including planning and inspections, Truty said.

An additional nine trained paramedics, a full-time training and emergency services officer, an additional fire inspector, and more outside training for each firefighter each year were also considered.


Truty reminded the board that his goal was to have 90 days of reserves set aside in case there is a delay receiving revenues from the county at the beginning of the year. With the current 57 days of reserves, “we have little in place” to cov-

er payroll, especially, if there is a problem in February.

Regarding infrastructure quality, Truty's goal for equipment and fleet replacement is to finish paying current leases and to also set money aside for planned future capital improvements to avoid future debt. Besides vehicles, other

items such as radios, hoses, self-contained breathing apparatus, and defibrillators are extraordinarily expensive, he said. If the district could identify a replacement cycle and create a reserve fund, that would be ideal, he said. Hildebrandt said that had been the target in the past, but the variability in

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