Fire district adopts budget

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

The Keizer Fire Board unanimously voted to adopt its budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year Tuesday night.

No one spoke during a public hearing.

The meeting also wasn't fully attended as board member Mike Bauer gave his vote over the phone and Chet Patterson was absent.

The $8,126,476 budget is a 2.26 percent increase over last year.

The biggest change comes with three current district employees modifying their current work schedules to become shift commanders for a six-month trial period to begin in January 2017.

Keizer Fire Chief Jeff Cowan has said the change is intended to help solve logistics problems caused by increased call volume.

KFD experienced a 9.1 percent surge in calls last year. Given limited resources, the district frequently called for back-up from surrounding fire services.

The new shift commanders, division chiefs Brian Butler and Hector Blanco along with Captain Ryan Russell, will respond to overlap calls with a career or volunteer firefighter and free up the engine company officer that rides on the engine to the initial call. They could also pick up personnel from the hospital, respond to public service calls, burn complaints and other low priority calls as well as shadow new officers to provide immediate feedback on performance. In either of the first two scenarios, the presence of the shift commander would free up the engine for higher priority needs.

The program is expected to cost KFD an additional $49,000 in personnel expenditures, $4,000 in additional pay for Ryan, who will become an acting-in-capacity shift commander for the length of the trial, and $45,000 for a temporary hire while the program is underway.

Other items of note in the budget include the addition of a part-time clerk to assist with front office work and a 59-cent local option levy approved by voters in 2014, will allow the district to continue the employment of seven firefighters hired as a result of bond funds and federal SAFER grants.

Also on the agenda Tuesday night, the KFD board voted to increase ambulance rates 1.19 percent effective July 1 following the City of Salem's approved increase.

The board also unanimously voted to increase the salary of senior staff by an average of 3 percent, renewed the workers compensation package for 2106-17 and declared an E385 fire engine, which KFD has owned for 25 years, surplus, turning it over to Chemeketa Community College as part of a trade for services.

City needs committee volunteers

The City of Keizer is soliciting applications for volunteers to be considered to serve on the following committees:

• Festival Advisory Board: serves in an advisory role to the City of Keizer by researching the feasibility for developing venues for events and festivals. The Committee meets on the fourth Monday of February, April, July, September and November at 6 p.m.

• Keizer Points of Interest Committee (two vacancies): established to identify, authenticate, and memorialize sites of interest located in the Keizer area. The Committee meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

Public Art Commission (two vacancies): reviews, evaluates, selects, maintains, and documents all artwork, public art, and public murals within the city. The Commission meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m.

Youth Liaison/Page: Opportunities are currently available to youth for service on various city committees for 2016-17.

Nominations are also being accepted for Volunteer of the Quarter.

Volunteer applications and Volunteer of the Quarter nominations are available at Keizer Civic Center, 930 Chemawa Road N.E., or you can request an application be mailed to you by calling City Hall at (503) 390-3700. Electronic applications are available at www.keizer.org. For additional information on this volunteer position, please contact Debbie Lockhart, Deputy City Recorder at (503) 856-3418.

Applications/Nominations must be received by Wednesday, July 13.

Scholars abound

KEIZERTIMES/Lyndon A. Zaitz

Blake Gerstner and Sam Elder were the most recent recipients of the two scholarships provided by Making Keizer Better. Gerstner received the $1,000 Jan Cline Memorial Scholarship. Elder received the $1,000 Making Keizer Better Scholarship.

Submitted

At its annual membership meeting on Tuesday, June 21, the Keizer Heritage Foundation honored winners of two $1,000 scholarships. Miranda Glennie (left) won the Keizer Heritage Foundation Scholarship. Blake Gerster (second from left) won the Pearl Langeland Memorial Scholarship. Foundation president Lyndon Zaitz (right) also welcomes Blake's parents: Phillip and Shan Fletcher Gerstner.

At the same meeting the foundation recognized out-going board members JoAnne Beilke, Judy Peterson and Al Rasmus, who represent more than 30 years service.