



NICK BAUMGARTNER — Moves up one step.

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Aptos fire board names new chief

The Aptos fire district will have a new chief, a new captain and a new budget soon, it was announced Tuesday night at a meeting of the district's commissioners. maintain service levels, the district will not cut personnel but instead will eliminate previously hoped for equipment purchases and capital improvement projects. "We've cut back to what we felt was bare bone," Chinn said in regard to equipment purchases.

Nick Baumgartner will be promoted to chief, effective Aug. 1 when chief Richard Chinn retires, and Paul Vitali will assume the post of captain on July 1. Two new firefighters will be added to the staff to fill the vacancies left by promotions.

Under state mandate the district is required to maintain its current service, and, if possible, manpower levels, so no one will have to be fired Chinn said.

Whether personnel will be allowed pay raises this year is in doubt though. Chief Chinn explained that fire districts are bound up with regulations regarding state employees and will only be allowed cost-of-living pay increases if they are granted to state workers. The limit would be 5 percent. Chinn was pessimistic, feeling that if raises are approved by the legislature they may well be vetoed by Gov. Brown.

The commission is preparing to scrap its previous budget proposal of \$1,029,000 and pare down to \$889,000. Chief Chinn said, after attending various meetings with Assemblyman Henry Mello and fire chiefs, that it looks as though fire departments will have to operate on funds 10 percent lower than last year.

(Chinn cautioned commissioners, however, that there are still many unanswered technical questions regarding funding and that it may be necessary to cut the budget as low as \$750,000.) Because of the mandate to

Aptos plans to continue its paramedic program and has been notified that its application to send three firemen to the training program at Stanford has been accepted.

It was also reported that three unsolicited private donations totaling \$105 were received from Aptos residents wishing to support the paramedic program. Director Stewart Davis commented that the contributions indicate "People in the district believe in the program."

The board was presented at the meeting with a list of the department's calls involving medical service in the last two weeks. Figures show that out of 16 medical calls nine required the services of paramedics. Seven of those calls were for heart trouble.

Looking to the long-term future, Chief Chinn said that it is possible fire districts may be able to rely on service fees for funding in coming years. Other agencies are supported by fees, he said, and it seems the proposal for fire districts has "a good opportunity to pass" in the state legislature.

The new budget will be submitted to the county administrator's office next week. The CAO and Chief Chinn will then review the budget together before it is submitted to the county board of supervisors. The review process is scheduled to be completed by Aug. 9.