

and other entities.

He noted that this is preferable to the ongoing “buying and drying” of farms occurring elsewhere in the Arkansas River Basin.

Petersen, in his Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority update, reported that lower levels of state funding for all kinds of state initiatives will occur during the coming state fiscal year that starts in July, while the state makes substantial repayments of excessive severance taxes taken from the gas and oil industries. However, Donala will still be moving forward with hiring a new water operator in a new full-time position this year.

A new Donala accountant will be hired to replace Donala’s Sharon Samek, who is moving out of state in March. Petersen and the directors thanked her for her hard work and dedication. Samek attends these board meetings to answer directors’ questions about financial matters.

Petersen gave an update on Triview Metropolitan District Manager Valerie Remington’s “State of the District” presentation to the Monument Board of Trustees on Jan. 17. The consensus of the Donala board members and Petersen was that there should be more cross-talk and cooperative efforts between the Donala and Triview boards and staffs.

Petersen included a printed copy of OCN’s Jan. 17 BOT meeting article in the Donala directors’ board

packets for this Feb. 19 regular meeting. (www.ocn.me/v17n2.htm#mbot0117)

Operations and projects

Petersen stated that Donala will undertake a major \$775,000 water main replacement in the area of Doral Way of 3,250 feet of 8-inch pipes that are about 50 years old. Also, the district will replace service lines between the mains and the curb stops for homes, primarily within county right-of-way, but within private property in some cases. Residents will receive notices from Donala, and the district will hold an open house before this construction begins in May.

The Parshall flume used to measure Triview wastewater influent at the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF) has been removed and replaced. This replacement, which requires significant precise concrete work, happened to overlap a Dec. 21, 2016 state compliance inspection and the temporary flume that was installed between the removal and replacement was noted in the facility’s inspection report. However, Triview owns and maintains the flume, and its staff conducted the repair, not the UMCRWWTF staff. (See photo on page 16)

Petersen included the Feb. 3 state Health Department’s nine-page inspection report in the board’s meeting packet. There were no major findings in the state’s report about the facility, although the report did note the temporary loss of some flow data during the flume’s removal and replacement.

Public comments

During public comments, Donala residents Michael O’Hare, Barb Inlow-Childress, and Brian Scott asked about the district’s long-standing voter-approved mill levies, five tiers of water rates, and current/forecast capital reserve planning requirements. Office Manager Betsy Bray, Director Ed Houle, and Petersen led a half-hour response.

Bray stated that there were two Donala mill levy measures on the May 4, 2010 ballot. They were both approved by a two-thirds majority of Donala voters to ensure reliable long-term water and wastewater services:

- An increase in the existing 16.296 mill levy to 21.296 mills, which was exercised in 2013, and an increase Donala’s debt limit to \$20 million
- Allowing the district board to convert its bond debt mill levy’s tax revenue when the existing construction bonds were paid off to revenue to be used to pay for either existing water/wastewater capital debt or current operations/maintenance each year at the board’s discretion

Note: As a point of comparison, the adjacent Triview Metropolitan District’s debt has been three times higher than Donala’s for over a decade. See “Background on

Steve Remington’s comments” at www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#tvmd1108. Donala lent Triview \$1 million when Triview was not credit worthy and could not qualify for a supplemental loan for its cost share of the expansion of the Upper Monument Creek Regional WWTF. Donala paid off that loan on Oct. 22, 2014.

Houle and Petersen both said that Donala voters approve mill levy changes, not the board or the staff. The three higher Donala water rate tiers were designed to provide a negative cost dis-incentive to conserve water use by the large lot properties.

They also explained the Donala board’s goal of having water fees pay for all current operations and maintenance costs with a goal of 100 percent renewable water, and having mill levy revenues pay for long-term capital funding requirements to replace 50-year-old water and wastewater infrastructure that is reaching the end of its expected service life at the same time tap fee revenues will be diminishing to zero.

The district is nearing complete buildout. Petersen noted that there will only be about \$2.5 million in future tap fees from 76 vacant home lots remaining in Donala, which is 99 percent built out. Permanent mill levy revenues from property taxes are necessary for maintaining a capital reserve to pay for future water and sewer capital upgrades and pipe replacement projects in a fully developed special district in an alpine desert area “when things break.” The revenues also pay for expanding Donala’s renewable water rights portfolio to replace groundwater wells in the next 100 years.

Petersen also reviewed the wide array of new, very costly federal and state regulations that are now being imposed for the first time and very high utility rate increases that have occurred in the past two years and will drive future capital construction long after no more homes are being built.

For more information, see: www.ocn.me/v10n3.htm#dwsd, www.ocn.me/v10n5.htm#dwsd, www.ocn.me/v10n6.htm#dwsd.

The meeting went into executive session at 2:25 p.m. for determining positions relative to matters that may be the subject of negotiations, developing strategies for negotiations, and instructing negotiators.

The next board meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on March 16 in the district conference room at 15850 Holbein Drive. Information: 488-3603 or www.donalawater.org. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month.

Jim Kendrick can be reached at jimkendrick@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott

Fire Protection District, Feb. 21

Public mill levy steering committee meetings planned

By Lisa Hatfield

At the Feb. 21 Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting, the directors announced two more public steering committee dates, hired a financial consulting group to assist with the upcoming mill levy election, and put out a call for volunteers to replace Director John Fredell, who just resigned his board position.

For the second month in a row, the meeting was held in the truck bay of Station 1, since in addition to the board, there were about 18 people in attendance, and they would not all fit in the regular meeting room.

Chief Vinny Burns’ absence was excused.

Public comments agenda format changed

At the beginning of the meeting, Gent announced that starting at the March 21 meeting, public comments would be accepted for 10 minutes at both the beginning and end of meetings instead of for each agenda item, “because it has become a little too disruptive.” He asked residents to be as concise as possible with their comments at those times to allow others to speak as well.

However, no public comments were presented during the opening public comments agenda item at the start of this meeting.

November mill levy election plans include public steering committee

In his opening remarks, President Greg Gent summarized that the district was facing a serious impact to its budget, a result of losing half of its current territory to Colorado Springs through annexation. He said a steering committee was formed in the past month to discuss

20% OFF one regularly priced item at Lillians of Monument!*

A fun and fabulous Shoppe featuring NEW fashion... dresses, tops, denim, handbags, jewelry, footwear and more!

* With coupon. Good through March 31, 2017



Tue 12-5, Wed-Sat 10:30-5 closed Sun & Mon

251 Front Street, Suite 4, Monument
719.488.3550 • www.lillians.com/monument
www.facebook.com/lilliansofmonument

NOW OPEN!



Use our **FREE** moving truck @ move-in!
Call now or come visit our state-of-the-art, climate-controlled, RV and self storage facility.

1895 Deer Creek Road, Monument
www.MonumentHillSelfStorage.com
(719) 488.6884

March Special!
50% OFF
First Month's Rent