

Monument Board of Trustees, Jan. 2

Trustees will participate in 2019 budget-related committees

By Lisa Hatfield

The Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) discussed committees on both overall town staff compensation and the 2019 budget and a new Public Works facility, and they approved a set amount for a water in-lieu-of fee on Jan. 2.

Also, Town Manager Chris Lowe's written report included information about several land use items and projects that will be coming before the town soon, an armed robbery that occurred in Monument, and a high-altitude and water-wise gardening class offered to the public this spring.

Trustee Greg Coopman was absent.

Budget, compensation and Public Works facilities committees

Town Manager Chris Lowe said he wanted to continue the momentum to have trustees participate much sooner in the budget-drafting process than they have so far, so that if they had significant recommendations to what professional town staff drafted, those changes could be considered calmly and with plenty of time. "We don't need to have what happened this year ever happen again! ... Staff would love to have input from the board earlier in the budget process so we don't have surprises at the end of the year."

Note: Lowe was referring to the surprise police salary increase demanded by the trustees in late November, when the 2018 budget was nearly finalized and ready for board approval. See www.ocn.me/v18n1.htm#mbot.

Lowe also suggested that since compensation is a subset of the budget, it was not necessary to have trustees on two separate compensation and budget committees but to combine those into one committee. "But if the board wants another group, we are open to that," he said.

By having two trustees volunteer with the Budget and Compensation Committee, they could be involved before the budget needs to be approved next winter. The two trustees also would be a conduit of information to the rest of the board, Lowe said.

Mayor Jeff Kaiser and Trustee Kelly Elliott both volunteered to be on the Budget and Compensation Committee, which should start meeting in March and will include a review of other town salaries besides the police officers'.

Mayor Pro-Tem Don Wilson asked if there would also be a Facilities Committee that would discuss the needs of the Public Works Department, which has been asking for an upgrade to the size and safety of its building. Lowe agreed and said two trustees would need to volunteer for the Facilities Committee soon. See www.ocn.me/v17n6.htm#mbot0515.

Multiple comments on Public Works situation

Public Works staff member Monty Kuntz berated the trustees during public comments for the second time in two months. He said giving the police officers a large pay raise was discrimination against other departments that do equally dangerous jobs, such as digging deep repair holes containing gas mains, electric lines, and feces, or going up on the roof of the Town Hall on a 22-foot vertical ladder. He said he was troubled that there was not already a consistent pay practice among departments. Despite all the special certifications he holds, for example, "We are at poverty level," and he said that the cost of living in Monument was as high as in Denver. He said the trustees ignored input from their experienced and educated town manager and Public Works manager.

Later, during trustees' comments, Trustee Dennis Murphy confronted Lowe about Kuntz' accusations. "If we trustees make decisions based upon recommendations endorsed by the town manager, that is not discriminatory! That is in fact what we are supposed to be doing.... Do you, or don't you, have a process to tell your people, your directors, how to share their concerns with you? Is there no dialogue?" Lowe responded with frustration and sarcasm, saying, "I never talk to 'em!" Murphy retorted, "Thank you for that great response."

In-lieu-of fee for water rights set

Public Works Director Tom Tharnish presented a resolution approving a set in-lieu of water rights fee at \$10,000 per acre-foot. The town code already states that the town may accept a fee from developers in the event the water rights associated with the proposed development are insufficient. But the current resolution sets the exact cost per acre-foot instead of staff needing to ask the board to establish the fee each time

the issue arises.

Tharnish said this fee would set a specific baseline for those developments that are close to meeting water requirements. However, if a proposed development is significantly short on its water supply, "then we would re-evaluate the whole thing," he said. Lowe agreed that each development would definitely be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. When a piece of land is annexed into the town, it is required to turn over all its water rights to the town, Tharnish said.

The resolution was approved unanimously.

Town manager's report

The trustees did not discuss Lowe's written report that was included in the regular board packet.

Lowe's report mentioned that Nov. 14 was the Downtown Stakeholders Summit facilitated by Downtown Colorado Inc. It identified focus areas for businesses, nonprofits, arts and culture, education, and private developers. Topics included:

- "Placemaking" to shape visitor experiences
- Funding
- Engaging locals.

Regular monthly meetings will move these initiatives forward, he said.

Planning Department update

Principal Planner Larry Manning's report mentioned:

- The Conexus office warehouse project on Old Denver Road and a small residential replat on Beacon Lite Road near Town Hall were tentatively scheduled for the special meeting of the Monument Planning Commission (MPC) on Jan. 24. **Note:** See related article on page 14. For a summary of the Dec. 5 Conexus community forum hosted by the Tri-Lakes Chamber and Economic Development Corp., see www.ocn.me/v18n1.htm#photos.
- Phase 2 of Sanctuary Pointe residential development is tentatively scheduled for the Feb. 14 MPC meeting. See related article on a related Classic Homes community meeting on page 12.
- The department has several ongoing conversations underway about residential and commercial projects of a variety of sizes that are expected to be restarted or come in as new projects in the next month or two.
- The market remains strong for both residential and commercial growth.
- The department is also working on long-range transportation improvements including Old Denver Road, Mitchell extension to the south, Jackson Creek Parkway widening, and the connection of Gleneagle Drive to the north and east (to Home Place Ranch and Sanctuary Pointe).
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) upgrades are an ongoing project.
- Requests for engineering inspections have continued as the weather has remained warm.

Police Department update

Police Chief Jake Shirk's written report included:

- We had an armed robbery at Domino's Pizza. Detective [Amanda] Molnar is working with the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) to file our case on the two armed suspects that CSPD arrested.
- Our officers have now been trained and are carrying Narcan. We received the Narcan free of charge from Aspen Point, and it is used for emergency treatment of a known or suspected opioid overdose.
- I have been meeting with Innova Recovery Services, an out-patient drug and alcohol counseling service, to discuss assisting us with individuals who may seek help with addiction issues.
- Discussing municipal court-ordered counseling for minors in possession. I will coordinate with our town attorney to see if there is an interest in this.
- I contacted the District Attorney's (DA) Office to discuss the Police Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI). Our DA liaison advised that he will confer with the District Attorney, Dan May. I advised them that the concept, while potentially good, is much bigger and would require more resources than what Monument by itself can accomplish.
- Shop with a Cop happened Dec. 22. About 20 kids who had been nominated as children in need met with our officers, who took them shopping at Monument Walmart.
- Santa on Patrol went out on its annual Christ-

mas run on Dec. 23. Lots of toys and lots of kids. For photo, see www.ocn.me/v18n1.htm#photos.

Public Works update

Tharnish's report included:

- A new gardening series is being taught January through April. Town Gardener Cassie Olgren is

Dan Elders

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