

Donala Water and Sanitation District, June 19

Water agreement with Springs utilities approved

By Jim Kendrick

On June 19, the Donala Water and Sanitation District board approved a short-term water agreement with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) and a water lease for effluent credits between Donala and the Pikes Peak Community Foundation, received updates on 2013 costs of service, and discussed regional stormwater issues that may be addressed by a ballot issue in November.

General Manager Kip Petersen and Board President Bill George congratulated Director Bill Nance on his 90th birthday on June 13. Office Manager Betsy Bray presented a birthday cake to Nance before the meeting started to celebrate his birthday. Nance drew laughter when he observed that he was born on a Friday the 13th and his 90th birthday was also on Friday the 13th so maybe it isn't as unlucky a day as people think it is. A plaque on the Donala district office building states that it is the William Nance Building, commemorating his long history in guiding Donala.

Employees praised

George stated that three Donala water operators had received "rave reviews" from a Donala customer for solving a replacement meter issue: Ronny Wright, Joe Lopez, and Mark Parker. Petersen added that the district would provide a service next summer, time permitting, for curb stop cleanouts at a nominal fee. Emergency curb stop cleanout will continue to be provided at the current higher fee.

Petersen noted that Donala resident Mark Connell and his daughter Anna sought assistance from Donala for her science fair project called "From Ashes to Water" that would examine development of a filter medium to clean up wildfire burn scar stormwater run-off. Her project took second place in the state Junior Division Environmental Sciences competition for her strict compliance with the scientific method. She received an award of \$200.

Petersen and the board joined Anna in thanking Donala water operators Parker and Wright for their technical support, guidance, and training of Anna during this project.

Water agreement with CSU approved for 2015

Petersen recommend approval of a second addendum to the current short-term water service agreement with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) to "wheel, treat, and deliver" Donala's renewable water from Willow Creek Ranch to a connection with the Donala water distribution system at the south end of the district for one additional year.

The original short-term agreement with CSU was signed on May 1, 2011 and ran through Dec. 31, 2013. The first addendum extended the short-term agreement though Dec. 31, 2014. The second addendum extends agreement again through Dec. 31, 2015. In all three documents, CSU "is obligated to provide the district with up to 1,000 acre feet of water per year." An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons.

Donala's decreed renewable water right from Donala's Willow Springs Ranch, located near Mount Massive and Leadville, flows from the ranch down the Arkansas River and is stored in the Pueblo Reservoir through an annual agreement with the federal Bureau of Reclama-

tion. CSU transports Donala's water from the Pueblo Reservoir during high demand periods through a CSU pipe to a CSU water treatment plant.

After treatment of Donala's water, CSU delivers Donala's now-treated potable water by another CSU pipe to a connection with Donala's distribution system at the south end of the district for direct delivery to Donala customers. Donala does not have to further treat this Willow Creek Ranch renewable water after CSU treats it. CSU does not provide any of its water rights to Donala.

Petersen said CSU charges 150 percent of its "blended rate" for this transport and treatment for customers outside of its service area, or outside of the city of Colorado Springs. That amounts to 80 percent of the residential CSU water rate plus 20 percent of the higher CSU commercial water rate for delivery of CSU potable water to a CSU customer. Petersen noted that Donala's commercial percentage is much lower than 20 percent. Also, Donala pays about \$250,000 per year to CSU for a water investment fee to pay for use of CSU's infrastructure.

Petersen stated that Donala itself charges 150 percent of its standard fees for delivery of water outside of the Donala service area on a permanent basis. However, Donala is providing its own treated water, not treating another entity's water and delivering it as is the case with CSU. He said the next negotiation would be for transport of water through the Southern Delivery System when it becomes operational, and he will do his best to negotiate a lower rate or policy cost.

Petersen said the CSU cost is "disproportionate" since CSU provides none of its water to Donala but "this has been CSU's policy for years." He said he would try to arrange some meetings between board members and Colorado Springs City Council members to provide more information to the council about Donala's agreement with CSU.

Director Ken Judd asked Petersen to obtain a cost breakdown of the various actual costs incurred by CSU that includes the savings to CSU for not having to provide

any of its own water to Donala.

Bray said the current CSU bill has three parts: an infrastructure fee, a charge for the amount of water that is delivered, and fee increases minus credits. Each month the staff cross-checks the CSU invoiced water volume figures with the amount measured by Donala's meters.

There was consensus from the board that the CSU policy is expensive but better than placing a heavier load on Donala's groundwater wells during the high demand summer irrigation season. The board unanimously approved the second addendum with CSU.

Lease of effluent credits approved

Petersen recommended approval of a proposed six-month lease of Donala's treated effluent to the Pikes Peak Community Foundation, which he said is the umbrella organization that operates Venetucci Farms. The lease starts on July 1 and would allow Venetucci to pump its shallow alluvial wells along Fountain Creek by replacing the pumped alluvial water with water credits (minus the transit loss for evaporation and absorption) for Donala's effluent that flows south from the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility discharge pipe to the alluvial well location on Fountain Creek. The price for Donala's effluent credits is \$125 per acre-foot.

There was consensus from board members that they were happy to support Venetucci's philanthropic Pumpkins for Kids program. Petersen said he would seek renewals of this agreement as long as they didn't interfere

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