

expenses. Petersen noted he would recommend a 4 percent increase for each of Donala's potable water tier rates and a \$2 per month increase in sewage service fees for 2018.

Presentation of the proposed 2018 Donala budget

Petersen gave a lengthy in-depth presentation on his proposed 2018 preliminary budget, with total expenditures increasing from \$8.52 million for 2017 to \$8.93

million for 2018. Petersen said that the draft budget is available at the Donala office at 15850 Holbein Drive for Donala constituents to review. Contact the office at (719) 488-3603.

Financial reports

Petersen noted that use of renewable surface water had been expanded in 2017 and Donala had already switched over to treating only groundwater for the rest of the year to reduce operating costs. Well water costs less to produce, and the wells had been turned off entirely for more months than in previous years to extend their service life by reducing annual con-

sumption of this finite groundwater source.

The financial reports were unanimously accepted as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

The next regular board meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 7 in the district conference room at 15850 Holbein Drive. This meeting will feature the public hearing on the final 2018 budget. Information: 488-3603 or www.donalawater.org.

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Forest Lakes Metropolitan District and Pinon Pines Metro Districts 1, 2, and 3, Oct. 30

Tap fees increased to bridge more of the gap

By Lisa Hatfield

The board members of the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) and Pinon Pines Metropolitan Districts 1, 2, and 3 (PPMD 1, 2, and 3) met on Oct. 30 to discuss tap fees, approve a property exclusion, and hear a development update. They announced that the November meeting will be canceled, and the Dec. 4 meeting would include the 2018 budget hearings and approval for all four districts.

President George Lenz, executive vice president of finance of Classic Homes, was excused.

Higher tap fees effective Nov. 1

The board unanimously approved a resolution increasing water development fees, or tap fees, by \$3,500 effective Nov. 1. This brought the one-time tap fee cost to \$12,529 for any single-family home in PPMD 1 or PPMD 2 that had not pulled a building permit by Nov. 1. The resolution also added a statement to the new tap kit inspection fee in the Falcon Commerce Center commercial property (PPMD 3), saying that cost will vary based on the actual cost of developing each parcel, said District Manager Ann Nichols.

One reason for this increase was that the new

surface water treatment plant "had cost a couple of million dollars more than planned," said Assistant Secretary and Treasurer Doug Stimple, CEO of Classic Homes. One family currently owns all the Forest Lakes property as Forest Lakes LLC. Classic Homes does not own it but manages the development and the metropolitan districts. He said Forest Lakes LLC paid a development advance to the district and wants to get some of its capital back, although this increase "will only fill about half the gap" for the surface water treatment plant.

Nichols said the \$3,500 tap fee increase will generate \$1 million to \$1.3 million, and Tom Blunk of CP Real Estate Capital, representing Forest Lakes LLC and Forest Lakes Residential Development, who attended the meeting by phone, said this would be not be termed "pledged revenue."

Background: In September, the district was negotiating a contract "not to exceed \$8.5 million" for this new infrastructure. See www.ocn.me/v17n10.htm#flmd.

Also, the market analysis Nichols had done comparing FLMD with Triview Metropolitan District, Donala Water and Sanitation District, Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Wolf Ranch, and other districts showed that this new fee level was a fair request for new development.

Four members of the public attended this meeting, but none made comments during the public hearing on this resolution.

Exclusion petition accepted

The directors voted unanimously to approve a petition for exclusion of a 159-acre parcel in the southeastern section of PPMD 2. Stimple said that this parcel is hard to access and includes some federally-protected Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat. He and Assistant Secretary Joe Loidolt, president of Classic Homes, said it would be very expensive to provide utilities to this area and that it would not generate enough tax revenue to maintain them. The potential new owners plan to build just five units on the whole property and install well and septic fields instead of trying to connect to Forest Lakes infrastructure.

The sale of the land is contingent upon resolution of water and septic system details with Colorado Springs Utilities, Stimple said.

The resolution was conditional on the actual sale of the property for this minimal development.

District Counsel Russel Dykstra said that he would work with the petitioners and the El Paso County District Court to finalize the details.

Development overview and town's easement

Secretary James Boulton, vice president/project manager of Classic Homes, said 72 homes had been sold so far this year in Forest Lakes, and over 50 new lots in Filing 2B would open up soon. Phase 2 was going to be submitted to El Paso County in November.

Stimple mentioned that Blunk needed to know when Boulton was going to submit the paperwork to the county so that FLMD could coordinate its response letter to the Town of Monument regarding the blanket easement owned by the town. "We are trying to get them to not have a blanket easement, and there are some other things in there as well," he said.

Note: The Monument Board of Trustees approved the supplemental and amended partial vacation of blanket easements in Forest Lakes in April 2016. At the time, Town of Monument Public Works Manager Tom Tharnish said the easements would allow the town to have the ability to drill wells and install pipelines to access its water rights and still allow Forest Lakes the ability to move forward with building lots. The land in question is in El Paso County, outside the town limits. See www.ocn.me/v16n5.htm#mbot0418.



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