



**Above:** On Dec. 2, the Monument Board of Trustees approved an increase in base salary for Monument Police Department officers. Police Chief Jake Shirk, left, agreed that this move should attract more candidates to apply for positions in the department, which has lost several officers and is having trouble attracting new applicants. Public Works Director Tom Tharnish, right, saw \$200,000 worth of projects removed, at least for now, from his 2018 parks improvements budget to pay for the police salary increases. In 2018, a salary review committee made up of town staff and trustees will review all other town staff salaries. *Photo by John Howe.*

ideas about items that could be cut, and she would prepare a new budget draft that was purposely not balanced and would highlight some items that could be cut. But instead she brought a new draft budget that included the cuts she and Lowe suggested, and when Medlicott began making suggestions about other items that might be cut instead, Smith said it would be better "not to micromanage line by line" but to wait make any changes during 2018 as the budget could still be restated after information on actual revenue is known. "Staff is incredibly good at keeping things in line," she said.

After an extended discussion, it boiled down to several public works parks and other projects that were cut in order to find the budget for the late-breaking request for the police officer base pay increase. These included: permanent bathrooms at Monument Lake, a downtown Wi-Fi project, a pocket park for Washington Street, dock extension at Monument

Lake, solar lights at Limbach Park, improvements at Limbach Park playground, and an electronic ticketing system for police.

Also, millions of dollars in "unfunded" projects that were not included in the 2018 budget but had been listed for consideration included: a floating bridge at north end of Monument Lake, a xeriscape demonstration garden, new sports fields at Park Trail Park, a mill overlay project, an all-new public works facility, a new welcome arch on Second Street, and part of the cost for new water tank and transmission line.

Sgt. John Hudson and Sgt. Amanda Molnar both spoke in favor of the base salary increase, affirming that it would help the current officers as well as attract more qualified applicants. "Yeah, my guys are struggling," Hudson said.

During public comments, resident Nancy

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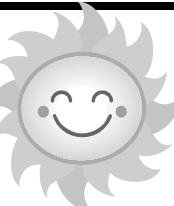
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