

ment, Green-Sinnard said, adding that the water tank loan imposed a deadline of March 16 on the proof required. Amending the budget to meet this requirement could not be done by the March 16 deadline, Green-Sinnard said. She suggested that the council vote to add an additional \$6.25 to the existing \$11.51 loan payment portion of monthly water bills.

Town Attorney Maureen Juran told the council both an ordinance and a resolution would need to be changed to add the additional funding.

The council voted unanimously to raise the water base rate fee by \$6.25 per month, and not raise tap fees or use rates.

Awake the Lake makes two requests

Speaking on behalf of Awake the Lake (ATL), Jeff Hulsmann told the council that ATL had been “tagged pretty good” with insurances costs, and asked the council for help with those costs, arguing that ATL had been covered by the town in the past. Council member Bob Mutu said the simplest way to accomplish this would be to have ATL serve as a subcommittee to the town’s Parks Committee.

Town Attorney Maureen Juran said she would have to research exactly what the town’s insurance policy, which is obtained through Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency (CIRSA), specified on

this issue.

The consensus of the council was that it would approve the request if CIRSA did not object.

Hulsmann also asked the council to approve a junior home run derby ATL is organizing. Planned for April 28 and 29, the event will make use of pitching machines and give prizes. The council voted unanimously to approve the event, providing it is covered by CIRSA.

Building codes updated

Jay Eenhuis, P.E., told the council about changes recently made to the regional building codes. The changes simplify construction while preserving safety, he said. Many of the changes concerned energy conservation, according to Eenhuis.

These revisions of the building code generated the most public comments ever, have already been approved in other counties, and will be voted on in El Paso County soon, Eenhuis said.

Council discusses RVs and guns

As part of a larger effort to update the town’s ordinances, the council discussed recreational vehicles and firearms at the March meeting. Votes on these topics were not taken to allow the public time to comment at upcoming meetings.

Juran told the council that the town currently does not regulate parking for recreational vehicles and commercial vehicles at all. She presented the council with a draft ordinance that specifies no recreational vehicle or trailer shall be parked in the street for more than 48 hours, and all recreational vehicles must be parked adjacent to the property of the vehicle owner. The draft also forbids obstructing the sidewalk in any manner.

Mayor John Cressman commented that on many streets in the town, parking a recreational vehicle could impede emergency vehicles.

On the topic of guns, Green-Sinnard pointed out that the town’s current ordinance was written in 1978 and prohibits concealed weapons altogether, which at present conflicts with other laws. The discussion of this topic was wide-ranging, touching on concealed carry, discharge of firearms within town limits, and whether BB guns and pellet guns should be included.

The two meetings for April will be at 7 p.m. on April 12 and 26 at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

March Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Weather conditions were pretty quiet for most of the month compared to what can happen in March. Temperatures ended up a little warmer than normal, and precipitation was again below average. The below-normal precipitation is the same pattern we’ve seen for several months in a row. However, April is most important for the region as we head into the heart of the growing season. A dry winter isn’t nearly as important as a wet spring for our region.

The entire first two weeks of March were dry and generally mild. High temperatures fluctuated between mild and cool as a series of shallow cold fronts crossed over the region. But as has been the case for most of the winter, the moisture with the storms stayed just to our north and east. Temperatures reached near record levels early in the month, topping out in the mid-60s on the 3rd as strong westerly winds helped an already warm air mass warm even more. Temperatures were warm again on the 4th, but a cold front moved through that evening, dropping temperatures back below normal from the 5th through the 7th.

Dry and mild conditions again returned from the 8th through the 15th, with temperatures again reaching the low to mid-60s on the 14th and 15th as a similar pattern developed. Mild and dry westerly winds developed ahead of an approaching storm. As this storm moved into the region, temperatures were initially warm enough that the first showers were in the

form of rain during the late afternoon of the 15th. As colder air continued to work in, light snow developed, with 1-2 inches accumulating by the morning of the 16th. After a brief break and return to sunshine on the 16th, the next storm moved into the region.

This storm finally brought enough moisture to make a little difference, with 3-6 inches of snow accumulating. The blowing snow also caused some travel issues in the area, especially because some of the initial snow melted and re-froze on the roadways. Temperatures were well below normal on the on the 19th and 20th as the cold air behind the storm stuck around for a few days.

Mild and windy conditions again returned for the first few days of spring, with temperatures climbing from the 50s to the mid-60s from the 21st through the 25th. However, another round of unsettled conditions returned later on the 26th through the 29th. This pattern produced another 3-6 inches of snow and more much-needed moisture, with around a half inch of liquid equivalent accumulating during the period. Sunshine again returned for the last few days of the month, and temperatures returned to normal with dry conditions.

A look ahead

April is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region and is on average our snowiest month of the year. We can see 70° temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Several recent years

have seen over 50 inches of snow accumulate during the month. Of course, it also melts very quickly, often adding very beneficial moisture to the soil and helping the vegetation, which is just getting started. We can hope this year will bring abundant moisture and make up for some of the dry conditions we’ve experienced over the last year.

March 2018 Weather Statistics

Average High	51.8° (+1.6°)
100-year return frequency value	max 57.9° min 38.0°
Average Low	23.9° (+2.8°)
100-year return frequency value	max 27.0° min 12.0°
Highest Temperature	65° on the 3rd, 15th, 22nd
Lowest Temperature	9° on the 7th
Monthly Precipitation	1.21"
	(-0.38", 24% below normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 4.29" min 0.22"
Monthly Snowfall	13.2"
	(-7.1", 35% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	44.3"
	(-45.7", 51% below normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	3.31"
	(-3.46", 50% below normal)
	(the precip season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Heating Degree Days	848 (-65)
Cooling Degree Days	0
<i>Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.</i>	

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters to the editor are on page 31.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

Security funds available

February’s tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High shook the nation. And it has turned District 38’s attention to safety and security. District officials have been hosting elaborate presentations on measures they believe are necessary to better protect students from an active shooter. What they never present, however, are any plans to reprioritize their spending to pay for the most pressing security needs. They simply present building renovations, safety equipment purchases, and security staff increases to parent audiences and then lament that they don’t have the funds to pay for them.

Really?

Last year the technology department spent \$1.9 million on tech supports, salaries, and equipment, including laptops for staff district-wide. Next year’s budget—without the cost of new laptops—increases the tech budget to \$2.1 million. Does a district this size need to spend \$2 million on technology—at the cost of neglecting students’ safety? D38 spent \$200,000 on advertising and “branding” to attract out-of-district students while expressing concerns about overcrowding. Their budget also includes a recent explosion of Central Admin to 86 positions—not including paid volunteers—and sufficient reserves to address what it calls “critical items.” Is student safety

not a critical item?

D38 leaders often assert that they prefer a proactive, data-driven approach. If so, they should recognize that they could afford quite a few of their safety measures by reallocating within their own budget—something American families do regularly. Reducing technology and administrator excesses and wasteful marketing efforts would free up funds for some of the most urgent security improvements and enable D38 to protect students immediately.

The district is hosting a community input meeting on safety and security at LPHS on April 16 at 6 p.m.
Cheryl Darnell

To the D38 school board

Can someone please tell me what’s going on with D38’s school board meetings? Why have the last six meetings included an executive session—so that the public can’t hear or see what’s happening?

I thought we elected new conservatives who value transparency and accountability. Everyone knows that secrecy breeds distrust. I think we deserve better.
Dan Schafer

Cookies, anyone?

Four times, over the past year, I have asked the D38 school board to please follow their policies KB and KCB, along with their mission statement and strategic vision, which all focus on the importance of partnering with parents and the community and state that such partnerships are “essential” to student achievement. My request was to bring back the community

coffees, and I even volunteered to bring cookies.

Now that we have a few new school board members, I am hopeful that the coffees will be reinstated soon. I don’t consider deliberative discussions with facilitated predetermined outcomes, as with the district’s long-range planning, the best approach to truly include all voices and ideas from the community. I am asking, once more, for the D38 board to please bring back the community coffees so two-way discussions can be had where all stakeholders can work together with the best interests of our kids in mind. I would think that such conversations would be welcomed. And, yes, my offer to bring cookies still stands!
Amy McKenzie

Outside money, insider influence

You are most likely aware of Monument’s mayoral and trustee election. You are also probably aware of the nasty mailers sent out regarding three people running for office. I received three of these things. All ugly lies and what the law calls “rhetorical hyperbole,” something so outrageous no reasonable person would believe it, thus skirting libel laws.

But the people behind this are still trying to influence your vote. And they are using out-of-town money to do this. The sole contributor to the nonprofit “Right Leadership Matters” who is funding this nasty campaign is the Housing and Builders Association of Colorado Springs. Why are Colorado Springs developers trying to influence a Monument town election? And one of our very neighbors is participating in this nasty campaign. Windover Media, owned by Monu-