

Summary of Town of Monument Public Notice, May 17: "Rumor control"

By Allison Robenstein

On May 17, Monument acting Town Manager Pamela Smith issued a "rumor control" message regarding the current investigation of Town Manager Chris Lowe.

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At the Feb. 5 Board of Trustees meeting, after an executive session, the board had unanimously passed a motion to have Town Attorney Alicia Corley "arrange an investigation into the town manager, in cooperation with CIRSA." Lowe was put on administrative leave following an accusation by Monument Police Chief Jake Shirk. See www.ocn.me/v18n3.htm#mbot, www.ocn.me/v18n3.htm#mbot-0215.

Smith's memo explained that, at the direction of the board, an investigation was done by an independent attorney retained by the Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency (CIRSA), and the board requested a presentation of the findings as soon as possible. The investigator completed the report and gave it to CIRSA on Monday, May 14, but a special meeting scheduled for that night was cancelled shortly before it was to begin as a quorum of trustees could not be present. The second special meeting was held May 16, and Mayor Don Wilson, Mayor Pro Tem

Kelly Elliott, and Trustee Ron Stephens were the only trustees present. Two CIRSA attorneys were there to present the report, but because there wasn't a quorum, the presentation of the report couldn't happen.

CIRSA attorneys were not available to attend the regular May 21 meeting.

"The town staff has had no access to the report, nor knowledge of what's in the report," Smith wrote. The report will be presented "only to the mayor and Board of Trustees" at either another special meeting or at the next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting, which is scheduled for June 4. This is dependent on the availability of the CIRSA attorneys.

Smith said anyone with questions or comments should contact her at her office, 719-884-8023, or cell, 719-675-0648.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

Monument Board of Trustees, May 21

Trustee governance crisis continues; public demands answers about four staff positions

By Allison Robenstein

Town staff appointment disagreements and stalemates have created two sides on the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT), with disparities in four key staff positions: manager, attorney, treasurer, and clerk. Also, on May 21, it became evident that the trustee vacancy that was to be dealt with as an appointment may require a separate public election instead, since the trustees did not appoint anyone from the three applicants.

Meanwhile, presentations by Girls of the West and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments were the shining lights of the night.

All six current trustees attended the May 21 meeting, as did Pamela Smith in her role as acting town manager. However, Town Attorney Alicia Corley and Town Clerk Laura Hogan were not present, and Smith said she is not coming to work as "treasurer" (her former position). The three were not appointed within the required deadline, but they have not been fired and so are still town employees, and this is the "legal conundrum," Smith explained.

Town staff appointments nil; two sides square off

The topic of staff appointments continued to be contentious.

Colorado statute imposes a 30-day deadline after the April 3 election for appointment of officers of the

town, including the clerk, treasurer, and attorney. At the April 16 meeting, the vote to reappoint the three via one combined resolution was continued until the newest trustees could come up to speed on the process. However, at the May 7 meeting, Trustee Greg Coopman expressed concern that the appointments were grouped into one resolution rather than being broken into three. The vote to reappoint the three officers failed at that meeting 3-3, and no voting could occur on May 16. See www.ocn.me/v18n5.htm#mbot and related May 7 and May 16 Monument Board of Trustees articles on pages 1 and 4.

On May 21, Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott immediately requested the meeting agenda be amended to remove the resolutions appointing the town clerk, treasurer, and attorney, since the town did not have legal counsel present at the meeting. Smith said that Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency (CIRSA) attorneys had been present on May 14 and 16, but they could not attend on May 21.

Note: The May 21 agenda no longer listed any resolutions about the town manager.

During board comments, Coopman suggested this issue has put people on different sides of the 3-3 failing vote that occurred at the May 7 meeting. According to a letter Coopman wrote on May 16 and circulated via email and social media, and via paper copies available at the May 21 meeting, he had requested separate appointments for all three ahead of the May 7 regular meeting rather than voting on a combined resolution, but his request was denied without public knowledge of the discussion. He said he feels villainized by other members for his vote and said he is being asked to re-vote on an issue that has already been closed, creating a precedent of changing outcomes of previous votes.

Trustee Jeffrey Bornstein also said he believed he is being bullied to change his vote.

Note: The request for separate appointment resolutions was incorporated into the May 14 and May 16 special meetings that ended up being canceled due to lack of a voting quorum when Trustees Bornstein, Coopman and Laurie Clark did not attend.

Mayor Don Wilson asked, "Who is asking you to change your vote?" He said they are not being asked

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