

**JUC (Cont. from 14)**

idly bankrupt many of the state's smaller wastewater treatment entities, creating an environmental crisis.

**Willow Springs Ranch  
development in review process**

Wicklund thanked Gillette for his professional, timely suggestions at a recent Upper Monument Water Quality Management Committee meeting. Gillette made specific recommendations for the developer to

improve a new sewer lift station and force main site application for the Willow Springs Ranch planned development parcel located between West Baptist Road and TLWWTF just west of the BNSF railroad track. When the developer, Polo Brown Co., finishes the lift station construction, ownership will turn over to MSD to operate the equipment and the associated new Willow Springs Ranch wastewater collection system.

Several local review steps like this are part of the EPA's extensive federal Clean Water Act 208 Plan re-

view process that leads to final lift station and force main approval, Wicklund said.

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The next meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. March 10 at the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of the month and are open to the public from all three owner-districts. For information, call Bill Burks at 719-481-4053.

Lisa Hatfield can be reached at [lisahatfield@ocn.me](mailto:lisahatfield@ocn.me).

**Donala Water and Sanitation District, Feb. 20**

## Staff changes forthcoming; leak policy sustained

By Jennifer Kaylor

The Donala Water and Sanitation District Board of Directors met Feb. 20 to acknowledge and decide on staff transitions and associated policies, hear an appeal to waive a customer water leak, and be briefed on legislative activity.

Director Dennis Snyder participated via conference call.

**Petersen's replacement named**

General Manager Kip Petersen, who is scheduled to retire at the end of May, reported that the board had held special meetings on Feb. 5, 6, and 7 to interview the finalists for the open general manager position. The slate of three finalists comprised Donala's Superintendent of Water Operations Mark Parker, Kevin Niles of Colorado Springs, and Jeff Hodge of California (also a former Coloradan). Directors planned to

determine the final candidate at an executive session scheduled to follow the meeting. Petersen confirmed later that the board unanimously voted to offer the position to Jeff Hodge.

Petersen announced that Chief Waste Plant Operator Terri Ladouceur had chosen to move on for "the next adventure in her life." He lauded Ladouceur's work as exemplary and that everyone would miss her "dedication, knowledge, and smile." Ladouceur began working with Donala in 2004 and accepted chief operations at the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRW-WTF) in 2013. Her final day was Feb. 28.

Waste Plant Operator Aaron Tolman will move into the Ladouceur's former position. Tolman possesses seven years of experience at UMCRWWTF and will work to earn the requisite licensing in 2020.

In relation to the staff changes, the directors unanimously voted to adopt an amended smart phone and tablet policy. The language modifications clarified the already strict password and information security measures that existed to manage loss, damage, and staff transitions.

**Residents seek waiver on mega-leak**

Petersen provided background information on David and Kristine Kuenzli's waiver appeal. The Kuenzlis left town for about two weeks in December and returned to find that—for no known reason—an exterior faucet had been flowing at a rate of up to 260 gallons per hour, and subsequently received an excessive water bill. The Kuenzlis appealed to the board to waive the amount in excess of what a typical water bill would be for their household.

The Kuenzlis argued that, because their house had not yet been outfitted with a cellular meter, they did not have the benefit of cellular technology's leak alert system, thus the district's leak policy should be adjusted for owners of non-cellular metered homes. Petersen confirmed that the 10-year phase-in of cellular meters began in 2014 and estimated that 60% of the district's homes have cellular technology. Yearly software advances make it necessary for some of the early cellular installations to be replaced as well. Parker added that about one-third of the district has current cellular technology.

President Ken Judd defended the 10-year phase-in process from old meters to new. Staff time and funds available make it logistically impossible for the district to replace all meters at the same time.

Petersen explained the district's leak adjustment policy. On a justifiable leak, he would establish an average water bill from the Kuenzli's December 2019 water consumption, subtract that average from their



**Above:** Chief Waste Plant Operator Terri Ladouceur resigned her position at Donala after working for the district since 2004. At Donala's Feb. 20 Board of Directors meeting, District Manager Kip Petersen applauded Ladouceur's exemplary dedication and knowledge. Ladouceur's final day was Feb. 28. **Below:** Petersen promoted Waste Plant Operator Aaron Tolman to fill Ladouceur's role. Photos by Jennifer Kaylor.



December 2020 bill and discount the December 2020 remainder by 50%. He added that proof of a plumber's assessment and a part's repair or replacement sufficed as evidence of a justifiable leak and that the district has agreed upon extended payment options in the past.

Judd advised the Kuenzlis that before the leak policy's adoption in 2014, no adjustment was available to residents and they were obligated to pay for the full amount of any leak. He also emphasized that the board's decision regarding their request would set a precedent.

The board voted unanimously not to adjust the current leak policy.

**Proposed legislation bears watching**

Petersen introduced three legislative items that raised concerns: SB20-153, HB20-1233, and HB20-1119. The Senate bill proposes to charge consumers a water resources financing fee of 25 cents per 1,000 gallons after a 4,000-gallon exemption. Concerns focused on how and where the collected funds would be spent.

The first House bill would preempt government control concerning the use or access to public property. Interpretation could allow public access to res-

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