

districts also attended, including MSD District Manager Mike Wicklund, PLSD District Manager Becky Orcutt, and WWSD Assistant District Manager Randy Gillette.

### Operator isolation plans reviewed

There was a lengthy discussion about how to ensure that at least one operator would be available to run the facility throughout the novel coronavirus event. "We certainly want to keep our wastewater plant going," Wicklund said.

The JUC authorized Facility Manager Bill Burks to buy any sleeping equipment or other necessities and food required for an operator and his family to take up full-time residence at the facility to limit, if not eliminate, possible contact with anyone infected

with the virus.

The JUC also authorized Burks to determine what new interim personnel policies may be needed right away for facility staff pay and benefits during the outbreak.

Burks said prophylactic germ protocols are already part of normal operating procedures at the facility, and employees, for example, are already in the habit of washing their hands frequently.

### Discharge monitoring report

Burks outlined specifics on the continued smooth operation of the facility. He presented the discharge monitoring report (DMR) for January, and he said all sampling results were well within required Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) discharge permit limits for TLWWTF and

other baseline sampling. This includes checking biological oxygen demand (BOD), pH, total suspended solids, total inorganic nitrogen, total phosphorus, total recoverable iron, dissolved iron, potentially dissolved zinc, potentially dissolved copper, nitrite, nitrate, and E. coli.

He said the facility is functioning at 29% of its permitted hydraulic capacity and at 60% of its organic capacity through the facility, consistent with recent trends.

Burks said that state-required chemical total phosphorus removal tertiary clarifier system continued to work well.

The board authorized Burks to buy and immediately make payments for already budgeted and appropriated total phosphorus treatment chemicals he

needs in bulk quantities from now on at his own discretion, during and after the coronavirus event to better manage costs and simplify management of order and delivery lead times with the most economical ordering quantities. This includes aluminum sulphate, sodium hydroxide, and polymers.

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The next meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. April 14 was suspended. Check with the facility to see if alternate meeting arrangements have been made. Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of the month at the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility, 16510 Mitchell Ave 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, March 26

# COVID-19 induces extra steps; engineers advise creative steps

By Jennifer Kaylor

Heavy snowfall on March 19 caused the regular Donala Water and Sanitation District Board of Directors meeting to be postponed to March 26. The meeting was planned as a conference call due to coronavirus concerns, which also accommodated Gov. Polis' March 25 Stay-at-Home order. All staff and directors connected via telephone and General Manager Kip Petersen requested roll call votes for all decisions made during the meeting.

**COVID-19 precautions outlined**  
Can COVID-19 be transmitted through water or wastewater? Petersen pro-

vided information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stating, "coronaviruses are susceptible to the same disinfection conditions in community and healthcare settings as other viruses, so current disinfection conditions in wastewater treatment facilities are expected to be sufficient. This includes conditions for practices such as oxidation with hypochlorite (i.e., chlorine bleach) and peracetic acid, as well as inactivation using ultraviolet (UV) irradiation."

Petersen continued by stating that Donala treats its water supplies and wastewater discharges in a manner

consistent with accepted disinfection procedures and is following recommendations of the CDC, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Petersen assured directors that schedule rotations, remote work, and ample office space for social distancing provided protection against COVID-19 infection among the staff. The meter upgrade program has been suspended to minimize contact between staff and the community. Donala is also a member of Colorado's Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network that supports member districts with emergency supplies and staffing needs. Out of respect to the economic upheaval and in support of hand washing, Petersen implemented a late-fee waiver and shut-off suspension for the next three months.

The hoarding of toilet paper also elicited speculation that people might substitute wipes and flush them down the toilet. He emphasized that wipes should never be flushed because they do not break down like paper products and can lead to jammed pumps and "fat burgers." See related article "Save the pipes, don't flush wipes" on page 6.

### Creative solution considered

Petersen presented a concept that Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) is considering as a means to provide the U.S. Air Force Academy's (new) Visitor Center (AFAVC) with wastewater treatment service. Engineers proposed building a pipeline from the AFAVC to Donala's Northgate lift station where Donala's conveyance system would transport the wastewater to the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF). The treatment facility is one-third partner-owned by Donala, Triview, and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. Petersen explained that Triview has excess wastewater treatment capacity and is agreeable to offering the excess to the AFAVC temporarily. See related Triview article on page 1.

Emphasizing that he was seeking input on whether to continue the conversation with CSU and the other entities, Petersen confirmed that costs had yet to be estimated and legal steps had not been mapped. He agreed preliminarily that separate agreements would be necessary—one to cover the conveyance of the AFAVC's wastewater via Donala's lift station and interceptor and a second to cover the treatment at the UMCRWWTF. Petersen confirmed that the estimated daily flow of 120,000 gallons would not place undue stress

on Donala's infrastructure nor would it increase arsenic discharge from the wastewater treatment facility.

The directors unanimously agreed to support continued exploration of this solution contingent upon the development of two separate agreements.

### NEPA Participation

#### Agreement reauthorized

Petersen requested that the board revisit an amended National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Participation Agreement that it had conditionally approved on Jan. 16. This agreement establishes expectations for participating wastewater districts in CSU's NEPA process to determine the environmental impacts of the proposed Northern Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI). See related Triview article on page 1.

The amended agreement incorporated the participants' requested changes and Petersen confirmed that district water attorney Rick Fendel expressed no objections to the board reauthorizing the agreement. Director Wayne Vanderschuere emphasized the goal to bring wastewater return flows into the NMCI conversation. Petersen acknowledged Vanderschuere's perspective and committed to keeping the topic alive. Donala's directors unanimously voted to authorize the amended NEPA Participation Agreement.

### New GM and other staff transitions

Petersen reported that Jeff Hodge accepted the position as Donala's new general manager. Hodge's transition from California to Colorado is underway, and his official start date is April 15.

An unexpected announcement was added to the staff transition update. Petersen informed the board of newly appointed Chief Waste Plant Operator Aaron Tolman's resignation, effective March 27, for which Tolman cited personal reasons. Tolman had been promoted to fill former Chief Waste Plant Operator Terri Ladouceur's departure, which became official on Feb. 28. Superintendent Robert Hull committed to fill the Chief Waste Plant Operator role as an interim for the foreseeable future and other staff members have been shifted to compensate for the lost support.

### Legislative bills postponed or amended

At the Feb. 20 Donala board meeting, Petersen reviewed proposed state legislation expected to be presented at the March 4 Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority meeting. Senate Bill SB20-153 and HB20-1233 have since been postponed indefinitely, Peterson reported.

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