

are run separately except when a tax increase change is requested.

- Dunn will have to run the election and it's not fun.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

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Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday every month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the pub-

lic via Zoom until further notice. The next regular meeting is scheduled one week earlier on Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, and minutes, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) or

contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at [admin@bffire.org](mailto:admin@bffire.org) or call 719-495-4300.

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## Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 15 Rates likely to rise in 2022

*By James Howald*

At its November meeting, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board heard an analysis of water and sewer rates from the district's financial consultants and debated how to set them for the next five years. A public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget was held and the board heard operational reports.

### Rate study proposes increase for water and sewer

District Manager Jessie Shaffer introduced Andrew Rheem, of Raftelis Financial Consultants, the company WWSD uses to study water and sewer rates. Rheem explained the purpose of a rate study is to make sure the district's prices will recover the cost of service and to guarantee the costs of each service are paid by the customers. Rate studies help with long-term financial plans and ensure that capital projects can be done, and debt service is managed, with the least financial impact on consumers, Rheem said, adding that inflation and population growth are factors in the rate models.

Rheem said an average of 220 new accounts per year in the WWSD service area were projected between 2023 and 2026, and an average of 100 new ac-

counts per year were expected between 2027 through 2031. Rheem said this was a conservative estimate of growth.

Rheem explained residential water rates have two fixed charges that increase by meter size: the Renewable Water Infrastructure Fee (RWIF) and a standard base charge. In addition to the fixed charges, residential customers are also billed for monthly water usage using a three-tier rate structure, with a cost per 1,000 gallons assigned to each tier:

- Tier 1 covers up to 6,000 gallons per month, with each 1,000 gallons currently costing \$6.14.
- Tier 2 covers between 6,001 to 25,000 gallons per month, with each 1,000 gallons currently costing \$10.12.
- Tier 3 covers all usage above 25,001 gallons per month, with each 1,000 gallons currently costing \$16.19.

Irrigation, non-potable, and bulk customers are billed using different rates, he said.

According to Rheem, sewer rates are simpler, with residential accounts paying a base charge of \$32.31 and non-residential customers paying a base charge and additional charges

based on volume.

Rheem recommended a 2 percent annual increase in residential sewer rates for 2022 through 2026, which would raise the sewer rate from \$32.31 in 2021 to \$35.80 in 2026. For residential water rates, he proposed a 5 percent total increase in 2022 and 2023, and a 4 percent total increase in 2024 through 2026. The base charge for most residences would increase from \$9.69 in 2021 to \$12.01 in 2026. Those changes would lead to usage costs in 2026 as follows:

- Tier 1 would increase to \$7.56 per 1,000 gallons
- Tier 2 would increase to \$12.47 per 1,000 gallons
- Tier 3 would increase to \$19.95 per 1,000 gallons

Rheem also discussed raising tap fees for new customers between 2 percent and 5 percent.

The rate study examined how reducing the RWIF would impact debt service on the district's outstanding bonds. For most residences, the RWIF is \$40 per month, and leaving it unchanged would generate revenue slightly greater than what is required to service the district's debt. Cutting it to \$39 would reduce revenue, but still generate enough to service outstanding debt. Rheem asked the board for direction on this issue.

Rheem pointed out that water consumption over the last 18 months was not typical due to impacts of COVID-19, such as schools transitioning to remote learning, so the study used consumption data gathered before the pandemic.

Following Rheem's presentation, the board discussed different approaches. Board President Brian Bush expressed concern that the proposed rates might not generate enough revenue to fund all the necessary capital improvement projects that have been identified and mentioned that the district has been drawing down reserves recently. He suggested a 5 percent increase across the board, with the exception of the sewer base charge, which should increase by 2 percent. The board came to a consensus on raising tap fees 5 percent in 2022, raising

sewer fees 2 percent a year until 2026, raising total water rates 5 percent a year until 2026, and leaving the RWIF unchanged at \$40 a month for most residences. The district will begin a new long-range planning process in 2022, Shaffer said, and that effort may influence further adjustments to rates.

The board will hold a public hearing on the proposed rates at their regular meeting on Dec. 20. They will vote on the rates following that hearing.

**Hearing on 2022 budget opened** Bush opened a public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget.

Shaffer reviewed recent changes to the budget, noting that the revenue projections will change in light of the rate discussion just held. Shaffer said only minor changes had been made to the budget since its last review.

There were no comments from residents on the proposed budget. The board will vote on it at their next meeting.

### Highlights of operational reports

- Operations at Woodmoor Ranch have shut down for the winter.
- The Loop water re-use project held a meeting recently and moved forward with funding paperwork required by El Paso County for the project to receive money from the American Recovery Plan Act. Other districts may join the project.
- Operation Superintendent Dan LaFontaine said the unbilled water statistic was very high in October due to two large main breaks. There was a delay in the reporting of one of the breaks because the resident who first noticed it reported it to El Paso County rather than WWSD.

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The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 20 at 1:00 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m., but the December meeting was rescheduled. Meetings are held at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call (719)-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

*James Howald can be reached at [jameshowald@ocn.me](mailto:jameshowald@ocn.me).*

*Monument Sanitation District, Nov. 17*

## Rates unchanged in 2022

*By Jackie Burhans and James Howald*

The Monument Sanitation Department (MSD) met once in November. The board considered a resolution to set rates and fees for 2022 and held a public hearing and a vote on the 2022 budget. The board updated the process and the fee charged for the use of its conference room and heard an update on the request for proposal (RFP) to provide legal services to the district. Finally, the board heard operational reports.

Board Chairman Dan Hamilton and Director Katie Saucedo were excused. Treasurer John Howe ran the meeting in Hamilton's absence.

### Rates stable for next year

District Manager Mark Parker told the board that the district's rate study showed the current rates and fees covered the cost of providing service and

the district was "good to go." Parker recommended that rates remain unchanged and said that they would be re-examined next year.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 11172021-1, which leaves rates and fees unchanged.

The district's rates can be found on their web page: <https://monumentsd.colorado.gov/schedule-of-fees>.

### Public hearing on budget held

Parker opened the public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget.

Director Laura Kronick said she noticed a difference between the draft of the budget emailed to her after the last board meeting and posted for public review and the draft of the budget on which the board was preparing to vote.

*MSD (Cont. on 20)*



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