

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Feb. 18

District bolsters cybersecurity defenses

By Jennifer Kaylor

The Donala Water and Sanitation District met to receive operations and management updates from staff and to hear about progress pertaining to potential water regionalization.

The February board meeting packet is available on the district's website by accessing https://www.donalawater.org/images/docs/packets/2021/February_2021_Board_Packet.pdf. A list of Donala's 2021 board meeting dates can be found at https://www.donalawater.org/images/docs/notices/2021_Meeting_Schedule.pdf

Florida cyberattack triggers district response

Water Superintendent Mark Parker reported about a Feb. 5 cyberattack against one of Florida's Pinellas County water treatment plants. Parker learned of the attack via Colorado's Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network, also known as CoWARN. The unknown attackers remotely accessed the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system and unsuccessfully attempted to manipulate the amount of sodium hydroxide used as part of the

drinking water treatment process.

Parker informed directors that he had met recently with Timberline Engineering Inc., Donala's SCADA contractor, and developed a plan to identify and strengthen Donala's potential cyber weaknesses. Plans to change or implement remote capabilities, automatic on-site system shut-down hardware, and two-factor authentication were already in progress or scheduled for the near future. Parker estimated that Donala would have at least four if not more layers of security due to measures he initiated a few years ago plus the additional steps. President Ed Houle commended Parker for his foresight in advocating for stronger security.

With Donala functioning as the operator in responsible charge for Monument Sanitation District (MSD), Parker confirmed that MSD's older system was not vulnerable to cyber activity.

Engineer presents overview of developing ideas

GMS Inc. engineer Roger Sams provided a report that covered several topics of interest to the district. He discussed potential water regionalization options

being explored by the Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority regionalization subcommittee. See <https://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#dwsd> for additional information about potential regional cooperation.

The subcommittee proposed preliminary ideas for routing return flows to participating districts with the goal of including as many districts as possible. Variables such as incorporating existing infrastructure and current, in-progress water projects; constructing possible new infrastructure to establish necessary connections; measuring sufficient infrastructure capacity; and managing water quality from various types of water sources all add to the complexity of options considered. Funding and determining participating districts' shares of the project costs significantly complicate matters as well. Sams characterized potential regionalization as having circumstances that seemed to change by the hour. He confirmed that he would keep the board apprised of new developments and discuss the impact of those developments on the district's goals.

A smaller, four-person team chosen from the subcommittee, of which Donala's General Manager Jeff Hodge is a member, had been tasked with selecting the engineers for conducting a regional reuse study. Sams clarified the purpose of the study as determining how to collect water flows that districts are obligated to send downstream and recycle those flows as a water supply. He confirmed that a request for proposal (RFP) solicitation had been sent with a due date of Feb. 26 and anticipated that an engineer selection would likely be made by mid-March. The RFP included a final report deadline of Dec. 1. Vice President Wayne Vander-schuer expressed his perspective that the primary regional reuse challenges rest in legal and political aspects, and the mechanical side would be fairly straightforward.

Addressing the completely different topic of wastewater contaminant discharge regulations, Sams discussed the possibility of directing Triview Metropolitan District's waste products through Donala's residuals management facility, either temporarily or permanently. Donala uses the residuals management facility as a pretreatment step to dispose of its well water waste—such as arsenic, iron, and manganese—at a landfill and dramatically reduce its discharge of the naturally occurring contaminants through the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF), which discharges into Monument Creek. See <https://www.ocn.me/v20n6.htm#dwsd> and <https://www.ocn.me/v20n7.htm#dwsd> for background information.

Although Donala manages the UMCRWWTF, the facility is partner-owned by Donala, Triview, and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. Because Triview relies on well water to serve its customers and its residential and commercial customer base has the potential to increase, Sams anticipated a subsequent increase in contaminants flowing into the UMCRWWTF from Triview's well water treatment process. If it would become necessary for Triview to pretreat its wastewater flows at Donala's residual management facility, Sams counseled the board that it would need to gain clarity on management, responsibility, and liability issues in addition to pricing.

Additional updates

- Hodge informed directors of two individuals who reached out through legal representation to express interest in leasing water from Donala. As of the board meeting, Hodge did not know the individuals' identities but confirmed that Donala had the physical and legal capacity to fulfill the requests. Directors consented to Hodge's plan to proceed on the leases. The district also received an inquiry about leasing space in one of its water tanks. Hodge provided a price quote but had not received a response.
- Houle commented that the U.S. Air Force Academy may have revived its interest in a short-term wastewater treatment arrangement with Donala. Houle committed to keeping staff and directors apprised of any new information.
- The district was transitioning to new accounting software. Hodge informed directors that the software would create financial reports with a different format, reor-



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