

by 2,000 gallons, from 6,000 to 8,000 gallons from previous years. Average ratepayers did not notice much of an increase. This year, the district does not have that option and a rate increase across the board is needed, Sexton said.

Director James Otis recommended the district include an explanation in the district newsletter to avoid any bad feelings. Two years ago, the rate increase blew up on social media, because everyone shut off their sprinklers due to an early freeze, and when they turned them back on the rates were higher, and that caused bad feeling until calmer heads prevailed, he said.

President Mark Melville asked what was causing the incremental rate increases over five years.

McGrady said the debt service, obtaining water rights, and the NDS pipeline project were causes. The district can pay for the vast majority of the NDS project with saved revenues, but it will deplete reserves. The budget has set aside about \$16 million on the NDS, but the total cost of the project is about \$20 million. The downturn in the housing market has also reduced revenue. It was common to sell 10-15 taps per month, and over 12 months that equated to 150-200 homes at \$26,000 per tap (\$2.6 million-\$3 million), but now the district is selling half that amount of taps. The district needs to pay the debt service, replenish reserves, and recapture the expenditure because of the slowdown in the housing market, and that is what is driving the rate increases, he said.

Treasurer/Secretary James Barnhart said that on the plus side, the district will have renewable water, but we cannot change or predict the housing market.

Sexton said that after the study, the district enacted the recommended plan, but it ought to conduct another study, because at the time the district did not know the cost of the NDS project.

Water attorney Chris Cummins said that when he resided in the neighboring Donala Water and Sanitation District, a 30% increase year over year was implemented for two or three years when they were purchasing renewable water resources. The costs are significant, and in the long term the resources are extremely beneficial to the residents, but the residents need to know in the monthly newsletter—knowing ahead of time did soften the blow for Donala customers, he said.

Otis said unlike TMD, Donala residents have a distinct lack of commercial revenue, and the TMD residents are used to having a gravy train.

McGrady said at the conception of the NDS project the district was fortunate to know the cost, but that was when the plan was to use 24-inch pipe, and when neighboring partners were onboard. To make matters awkward, piping increased in price, so the pipe was downsized to 16-inch pipe, and now the district is without partners in the project. A study in 2024 would be beneficial, because sooner or later the development will go away. Without the tap fees from the hundreds of homes, the district would not have been able to obtain water rights and build the NDS.

Melville said in retrospect the district has made capital purchases when interest rates were low, some very timely decisions that were needed for the future of the district.

McGrady said that most of the bonds that were issued had less than 3% interest rates.

Melville opened a public hearing for the 2023 water and wastewater rates and fees, effective Feb. 1.

Resident Jason Gross said McGrady did a good job explaining the reasons for the rate increases.

Hearing no other comments, Melville closed public hearing.

Later in the meeting, the board approved 4-0 the 2023 increase in the district's water and wastewater rates and fees.

Note: The new base rate (renewable water fee) increased by \$3; the metering and billing charge

per month increased by 50 cents. The volume rates per 1,000 gallons are: Tier 1: 0 to 8,000 gallons—increased by 62 cents. Tier 2: 8,001 to 20,000 gallons—increased by 95 cents. Tier 3: 20,001 to 30,000 gallons—increased by \$1.69. Tier 4: 30,001 to 40,000 gallons—increased by \$2.21. Tier 5: Over 40,000 gallons—increased by \$3.27. The wastewater base rate will be \$52.44 per month. For more information and the full rate table, visit: www.triviewmetro.com.

Northern Delivery System update

McGrady said the following:

- The plans for the NDS pipeline are almost at 100% and the pump station plans are at about 90%.
- The 16-inch pipe has been ordered, with about a 16-week delivery time. There are no other apparent supply delays.
- The installation of the pipeline will begin at TMD plant "C" (behind the Sanctuary Pointe development) and be installed from there toward Roller Coaster Road beginning in April. The district expects to have all the pipe installed by September.
- The convey, treat and deliver contract was expected to be delivered for comment by the end of January. The Colorado Springs Utility Board will then consider the contract in late February, followed by a review in March by the Colorado Springs City Council.
- Segment "C" of the NDS pipeline, from Agate Creek Park through Homeplace Ranch and up to serve Jackson Creek filings 3-6 is complete. The project went over cost by \$30,000 due to an additional bore of 30 feet at \$500,000 per foot and the addition of poured concrete bores to secure giant reverse anchors to hold the pipeline in place and prevent sagging. The final cost was \$1.699 million. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#tvmd.

District receives reimbursement

McGrady said the district received about \$537,147 from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to help reimburse the costs for the work the district completed on the south reservoir. The district has almost \$300,000 remaining on a 2022 loan at 2.05%.

Cummins said CWCB is almost begging districts to build water storage facilities.

Reservoir level outlook

Cummins said the snowpack statewide is terrific, particularly in the upper and lower Colorado River basin where it is about 158% above normal. The Arkansas River basin is at about 72% and maybe better by late January. The levels emphasize how necessary it was for the district to purchase water rights diversification and the development of adequate storage, because the long-term forecast is wet and cold this winter, and depending on where the low pressure passes along the Front Range, somewhere the district owns water rights that will receive snow, he said.

Higby Road widening project

McGrady said he had met with the Lewis-Palmer High School principal, the D38 school board, and the administrative staff to discuss the widening of Higby Road. The district shared its design for the widening project, and it was generally happy with the district's design, but the intersection has not been defined. A solid island with a pass through is included in the design from Bowstring Road to Jackson Creek Parkway. Students will be able to exit and travel east on Higby Road. It is a tough spot and school officials rejected a traffic circle that would create excessive traffic pouring into the neighborhoods along Bowstring Road, he said.

Otis said that the final plan needs to be idiot proof, unlike the traffic islands on Baptist Road that adults cannot navigate safely. The island should be just high enough that no one will plow over it, exactly like the islands along Jackson Creek Parkway, he said.

Gross said that he would prefer the district spend extra dollars during the widening of Higby Road to ensure the high school students

can navigate the Lewis-Palmer High School area safely. One life of a student saved will be worth it, he said.

Public Works, parks, and open space update

Superintendent Matt Rayno said the following:

- The Public Works Department had been clearing snow from the streets in Forest Lake Metropolitan District, another 3-4 miles of road in addition to TMD roads.
- Some minor repairs and preventive maintenance were made to the snow removal equipment.
- Public Works implemented additional webinar safety training for 2023, along with the regular weekly training.
- Staff are working around the weather to put the landscaping back at Agate Creek Park.
- Detention pond repairs and maintenance will be made in February, before the spring

Specializing in Residential Cleaning *A Gift of Time*

Overwhelmed?
Want your home spic and span?

Call Stacy today!
(719) 930-2178
www.agiftoftime.us

Weekly • Bi-weekly • Monthly • Move-outs • Move-ins.



ELIZABETH BRYSON INSURANCE GROUP

Medicare help now available!

Have this card?



Give me a call today, and I will help you understand Medicare and the options available.



Elizabeth Bryson
719-418-9350
325 2nd Street #M,
Monument, CO 80132
www.ebinsurancegroup.com

We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.

FACINELLI MOTORS



TIME FOR A ROAD TRIP CHECK?

QUALITY AUTO REPAIR

SUBARU • HONDA • TOYOTA

CALL TODAY 488-6729

706 Westward Lane, Palmer Lake
Mon.-Fri. 7:30 am-6:00 pm
Call for appointment. We book up quickly.

