

Monument Town Council, Oct. 7 and 21

Council discusses finance, nonprofit work, employee survey

By Chris Jeub

The Monument Town Council meetings on Oct. 7 and 21 covered the unanimous approval of a new revenue and finance ordinance, updates from local nonprofits Tri-Lakes Cares and the Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the results of the town's first employee satisfaction survey, and public feedback on council stipends and council feedback on a new playground at Limbach Park.

Revenue and finance ordinance

The Monument Board of Trustees voted 7-0 to approve a comprehensive ordinance updating the town's tax and business regulations. The new rules introduce several changes aimed at improving compliance and streamlining administrative processes. One key change caps the vendor's fee at \$100 per return while maintaining the current rate of 3.33% for timely tax filings. To further encourage digital submissions, the town will begin charging a \$25 fee for manual paper filings, which were previously free.

The ordinance sets a fixed interest rate of 1% per month on overdue taxes, replacing the former rate tied to the Colorado State Banking Commission. Penalties for fraud will also be revised, with a new penalty set at either 50% or 100% of the unpaid amount, pending final determination. For repeated violations, a special penalty will be enforced, requiring payment of the greater of 25% of the unpaid tax or \$250.

The ordinance also allows the town to recover audit costs by billing taxpayers directly for the time and resources involved. The newly passed regulations repeal and replace existing sections of the municipal code, adding new provisions to better align the town's business licensing, revenue management, and finance operations with its current needs.

Tri-Lakes Cares updates

Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC) representatives Haley Chapin and Bill Lyons provided an update on the organization's efforts to address the growing needs of residents in northern El Paso County. TLC is a nonprofit that offers essential services such as food assistance, rent and utility support, car repair aid, medical help, and financial counseling to families and individuals in crisis. The organization serves as a lifeline for those facing unexpected hardships, ensuring that basic needs are met with dignity and care.

Chapin and Lyons emphasized the increasing demand for these services, noting that 58% of households enrolled in TLC programs live below the federal poverty line—\$31,200 annually for a family of four. Rising housing costs, rent, and a growing population have added strain to many residents, highlighting the importance of community support. One success story shared involved a mother of two who, after losing her job, was able to stay in her home thanks to TLC's rent assistance and eventually secured full-time employment.

Both Chapin and Lyons expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Town of Monument for its continued financial support, stressing how critical it is to the organization's ability to serve the community. "This funding goes a long way," they said, noting that it helps cover essential costs like rent and utilities for struggling families. They also pointed to TLC's recent community needs assessment, which aims to keep the organization ahead of emerging challenges in the region.

Pikes Peak SBDC updates

Brandon Eldridge, executive director of the Pikes Peak SBDC, provided an update on the center's activities and impact. SBDC offers free consulting, training programs, and events to help local businesses grow and thrive. Eldridge mentioned its collaboration with the

Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, where it provides coaching and educational presentations to businesses throughout the area.

Eldridge highlighted the Veterans Small Business event held at Great Wolf Lodge on Nov. 1, as well as the popular "Year of AI" presentation, which provided valuable insights into artificial intelligence for the business community. He emphasized that SBDC's consulting hours—126 so far this year—are offered at no charge, making a significant impact on the success of local entrepreneurs. Eldridge encouraged attendees to sign up for the SBDC's newsletter to stay connected with future programs and resources. Mayor Mitch LaKind also commented on the presentation, noting several photos featuring Danny Meyer, a friend and entrepreneur, which reflect the center's deep ties to influential community members. Eldridge closed by thanking the Town of Monument for its ongoing support, stressing that such partnerships are essential to SBDC's mission of empowering businesses and fostering economic growth.

Employee satisfaction survey

Emily Trujillo, Human Resources manager for the town, presented the results of Monument's first employee satisfaction survey, conducted from Sept. 5 to 12 using software BambooHR. Designed to ensure anonymity and encourage honest feedback, the survey asked two simple questions: employees' likelihood to recommend the town as a place to work and suggestions on what makes the workplace great or how it could improve. With an 80% participation rate, the survey provided valuable insights, Trujillo said. Key positives included people, culture, community, atmosphere, and leadership, while areas of concern focused on compensation, communication, recognition, and processes.

Following the survey presentation, Trujillo outlined upcoming action plans, including a compensation survey to be completed by early 2025, initiatives to enhance communication, improved employee recognition programs, and a focus on accountability for policies and procedures. This presentation also set the stage for a discussion on seeking professional vendors to conduct an evaluation of the town manager position. Trujillo mentioned that five evaluation companies were approached, with two submitting proposals. The council discussed which vendor to select but had not reached a decision by the end of the meeting.

LaKind called the survey "a step in the right direction" but requested more detailed data, such as employee comments, and Councilmember Marco Fiorito encouraged the inclusion of longer surveys in future evaluations. Trujillo confirmed a follow-up survey with more depth would be conducted in March.

Public and board comments

Executive Director of Tri-Lakes Cares Haley Chapin spoke again voicing her support for council stipends during public comments not on the agenda. She emphasized how compensation could encourage broader participation and equity in local government.

"A stipend helps level the playing field. Without it, only those with financial flexibility might consider running," Chapin explained. She noted that serving on the council often comes with personal costs, such as lost work hours, childcare, and transportation, which stipends could help offset. Compensation, she added, could also improve retention, reduce burnout, and attract a more diverse pool of future candidates, ensuring the community is fully represented. Chapin acknowledged that members could donate their stipends to causes like the Police Department or nonprofits but urged the council to consider the

broader community benefit.

Councilmember Steve King remarked on the successful launch of the new playground at Limbach Park. He thanked Town Manager Madeline VanDenHoek and the park and public works staff for their hard work. "Every time I drive by, there's a zillion kids out there, and it's good to see them outside," King said, reflecting on the playground's popularity.


The Monument Council usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third

Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road.

The next meetings are scheduled for Monday Nov. 4 and 18. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minutesondemand.com> and click on

Town Council.
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Alpaca Holiday Extravaganza

Join the Southeastern Colorado Alpaca Breeders celebration of the 19th Annual Holiday Alpaca Extravaganza.

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This FREE event is open to all.

Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, Nov. 30 from 9AM to 5PM
Sunday, Dec. 1 from 10AM to 4PM



Black Forest Community Club is located at 12350 Black Forest Rd. just north of Shoup Rd. For latest information see our web page at <http://secab-extravaganza.weebly.com/> or call 719-330-7349