

FLMD (Cont. from 10)

with the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI) pipeline project.

Attending via teleconference were FLMD Manager Ann Nichols, Tom Blunk of CP Real Estate Capital representing Forest Lakes LLC and Forest Lakes Residential Development, district consul Nicole Peykov of Spencer Fane law firm, and the following board directors: President George Lenz, executive vice president of finance for Classic Homes, Secretary Joe Loidolt, president of Classic Homes, Treasurer/Secretary Douglas Stimple, chief executive officer of Classic Homes, Director/resident James Boulton, vice president/project manager of Classic Homes, and Director Steve Schlosser, a project manager for Classic Homes.

Note: There were no public comments made during the meeting.

NMCI update

Nichols said the district is working with CSU and TMD to consider moving its wastewater treatment process to Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) via the proposed NMCI pipeline. The NMCI pipeline project 30% design phase was completed in November and revealed the preliminary cost estimate from the general contractor to be about \$92.8 million. Initially, the thought was to split the cost three ways between CSU, TMD, and FLMD, and although the district and TMD were ready to go in December, CSU decided

to lock in the cost sharing with an IGA, with CSU responsible for 65% of the cost and the northern entities responsible for 35%.

But CSU decided to break out the sections, and FLMD and TMD would also be responsible for the cost of the portion of pipeline that serves only the northern entities (about 1,200 to 1,300 feet extending north of the Air Force Academy boundary). The additional pipeline footage pushed the northern entities' share up to 35.9%, with TMD paying the larger portion of the share because FLMD has only about 500 homes.

Nichols requested the board approve the IGA to lock in cost sharing that breaks out the two sections of the interceptor pipeline, with the upper section participants contributing \$33.4 million, up from \$32.5 million. CSU believes the project is very important with long-term benefits, and a decision to proceed to a 100% design will be made around mid-December, but the district and TMD are fully committed, said Nichols. See <https://wp.ocn.me/v25n1flmd/> and the TMD article on page 10.

Peykov said the IGA is largely in line with the first design agreement, and it is important to continue pushing the project design through and not delay any further.

Stimple said this is a logical extension of where the district has been over the last few years.

The board unanimously approved the IGA.

Peykov said that by end of year the design will

be 90% complete, and if the final price is different an addendum can be executed. The district will not be stuck moving forward with the project if the costs are higher than anticipated, said Peykov.

Nichols said it is an expensive project, and all parties are sensitive to the cost, but after running the numbers against continuing to use the Upper Monument Creek Regional Waste Water Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF), it is still a reasonable cost and it will benefit the customers, said Nichols.

Note: The proposed pipeline would transport the district's wastewater to CSU's J.D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility (JDPWRRF) near the intersection of Mark Dabbling Boulevard and Garden of the Gods Road in Colorado Springs. Participating in the NMCI pipeline project would avoid the cost of making the required pending regulatory upgrades to the UMCRWWTF.

The meetings adjourned at 4:11p.m.

Meetings are usually held quarterly or when necessary on the first Monday of the month at 4 p.m., via teleconference. Meeting notices are posted at least 24 hours in advance at <https://forestlakesmetrodistrict.com>. For general questions, contact Nichols at 719-327-5810, anicholsduffy@aol.com.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Monument Sanitation District, Feb. 19

District manager clarifies upcoming election

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its February meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board heard an operational report from District Manager Mark Parker that included details about the upcoming election which will fill two seats on the MSD board. It also heard updates on repairs needed at the district's headquarters.

Two board seats to be filled in May election

In response to a question from resident Laura Kronick, Parker explained that two board seats would be on the ballot on May 6. The election will be held at the MSD community room at 130 Second St. in Monument between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. The directors elected will serve four-year terms.

Kronick asked why some incumbent directors had been elected to three-year terms. Parker said the state Legislature had decided to move special district elections to odd years, keeping state elections on even years. Three-year terms facilitated this change, he said. He explained board President Dan

Hamilton and Directors Tony Archer and Janet Lewandowski were elected in May 2023 for four-year terms. Directors John Howe and Skip Morgan were elected in 2022 to three-year terms. Parker said two self-nomination forms for the two available seats had been requested.

Parker said directors were limited to two consecutive terms unless voters decide to remove that limitation.

Headquarters gets repairs

Parker told the board that the Town of Monument's smart water meters had indicated the MSD headquarters had a water leak resulting in 12,000 gallons of lost water for which the district had to pay. A plumber rebuilt the toilets and traced the leak to a dish soap dispenser at the Black Forest Foods Café and Deli, one of the tenants in the building. Parker said he would use the EyeOnWater application provided by the Town of Monument to do a weekly check on water usage at the headquarters building.

A cracked heat exchanger in the HVAC unit serving the conference room led to the replacement of

the entire furnace, at a cost of \$5,354. The furnace was more than 20 years old, Parker said. An expansion tank on the hot water system had also failed, and Parker elected to do the repair himself.

Parker said the recently applied \$2 fee for a paper monthly statement had encouraged many of the district's customers to switch to paying their bill online: 737 of the district's 1,708 accounts are now being paid online.

Monument Sanitation District meetings are held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month in the district conference room at 130 Second St., Monument. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 19. See <https://MonumentSanitationDistrict.org>. For a district service map, see <https://MonumentSanitationDistrict.org/district-map>. Information: 719-481-4886.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Feb. 20

Voters remove term limits

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At its February meeting, the Donala Water and Sanitation District's (DWSD) board heard the results of a special election held earlier in the month and a cost-of-service analysis. General Manager Jeff Hodge and Superintendent of Water Operations Ronny Wright delivered their monthly operational reports. The board rescheduled its March board meeting.

The meeting ended with an executive session.

Voters approve unlimited terms

Accounts Payable Specialist Christina Hawker presented the results of a special election held Feb. 4 to the board. By a vote of 54 to 39, the district's voters removed the requirement that board members be limited to two consecutive terms on the DWSD board. The board put the issue before the voters due to the difficulty of finding experienced candidates willing to serve on the board on a volunteer basis.

Hawker said the seats held by board President Wayne Vanderschuere and Director Ed Miller are up for re-election in 2025. Removal of term limits means Vanderschuere and Miller can run again if they choose to do so. Hawker said the complete list of candidates would be known on March 4 and, if the number of candidates matches the number of seats available, the election, scheduled for May 6, would be cancelled.

Cost-of-service analysis confirms 5% rate increase

In November 2024, the board asked Todd Cristiano, a consultant with Raftelis, a company that does financial modeling and rate studies for local governments and utilities, to analyze DWSD's rates with an eye to determining if they cover the cost of delivering water and sewer service and upcoming capital improvement projects. At that time the board had considered rate increases as high as 10% but had settled on a 5% across-the-board increase and it wanted Cristiano to determine if the lower increase would be adequate.

Cristiano told the board he had studied how much revenue DWSD needs going forward, whether the rates are fair to all customers and if rates would deliver revenue stability. He noted that the district's sewer service reserves were somewhat behind the water service reserves.

Cristiano said he analyzed two scenarios: rehabilitating the R. Hull treatment plant and successful completion of the Loop water re-use project. He did a 10-year analysis of those scenarios. He concluded a 5% rate increase would cover both scenarios. Reserves would accumulate at first and then be spent down with a 5% increase, Cristiano said. Tap fees were included in his analysis.

Four customer classes were used in Cristiano's planning: residential customers, who make up 84.7% of revenue; irrigation customers, who make up 6%; multifamily customers, who make up 5%; and commercial customers, who make up 4.3%. The costs for average day consumption and peak day consumption were also factored into Cristiano's analysis. He explained that his model showed the same amount of revenue would be recovered but it would be allocated a bit differently among customer classes. The current sewer rates were fair and equitable, he said.

In his conclusion, Cristiano said a 5% rate increase would cover the costs of service delivery and needed reserves. He said the board should look at its financial plan on a regular basis and should decide how it wants to handle the rates for multifamily residences.

Vanderschuere pointed out the district has few multifamily residences and suggested the board might be chasing a solution for a problem that it doesn't have. He said he was leaning toward leaving the current multifamily rate in place. He said he favored moving forward with the 5% rate increase, which would include a 5% increase on tap fees, holding the needed hearings in March so that the rates could be implemented in April.

Manager's report

Hodge told the board that not much financial data had been generated in the first two months of the year, but "all is well" in terms of the budget. In his update on the Loop, he noted that John Kuosman had left his position with Merrick Inc. and would be replaced by Mark Valentine as the Loop's workflow manager. The Loop was focusing on water treatment design and had received bids from seven companies.

Hodge gave an update on redrilling Well 7D, which is adjacent to the treatment plant and district offices at 15850 Holbein Dr. Trees would be com-

ing down soon and 40-foot sound-damping walls would be going up. The district was using the greatest amount of noise prevention technology during the three-week drilling period, he said. The goal was to have the redrilled well in production by May or June.

Water report

Wright said the state of Colorado had been in the district to complete a water sanitary survey in February. The survey went well: Two deficiencies were noted and corrected the same day.

March board meeting rescheduled

The board voted to delay its March meeting from March 20 to March 27 to allow 30 days' notice of a public hearing on rates.

Executive session

The meeting ended with an executive session to determine negotiating positions relative to participation in the North Monument Creek Interceptor project.

Correction

Last month's article listed the Academy Water and Sanitation District (AWSD) as one of the operators of the Upper Monument Creek Waste Water Treatment Facility (UMCWTF). The UMCWTF does in fact treat AWSD's wastewater, but AWSD does not have any operational role in the facility. AWSD is a customer of DWSD, which shares operational responsibilities for the facility with Triview Metropolitan District and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 27 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The March meeting was delayed by one week to allow adequate notice of a public hearing. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, Feb. 20

Interim workflow manager joins Loop team

By James Howald

In February, the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA, or the Loop) board voted on an amendment to its agreement with Merrick and Co. that names Mark Valentine as interim workflow

manager. It updated its founding document to make it easier for board members to hold discussions among themselves. The board heard an update from Valentine and a financial report from Corbin Fromm, of Fromm and Co. LLC, the Loop's accounting firm.

The meeting ended with an executive session.

Valentine replaces Kuosman as workflow manager

Nicole Peykov, the Loop's attorney, asked the board