

“Eduspeak” for clarification and requested an additional, parent-friendly rubric.

MA’s board policies can be found at <http://bit.ly/ma-boarddocs>

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Board member Craig Carle spotlighted the Monument Academy Gala team for their contributions.
- Finance Director Laura Polen reported that the February financials show that MA is well-positioned to meet bond ratios. She credited People Operations Director Krista Pelley for staffing projections and noted collaboration with the registrar on FTE enrollment tracking for budgeting.
- Graham requested the removal of the Highway 105 Committee report, as the work around West Campus is complete.
- Clinton reported that the Curriculum East Committee reviewed last month’s approved policy and proposed edits for a vote. It will present the History and Leadership rubrics to the board in May.
- Board member Jilinda Dygert

said the Student Accountability and Advisory Committee (SAAC) for East Campus reviewed survey results and will share recommendations at the May board meeting. She urged parents to attend the final meeting on May 5, 3:30-5 p.m., or email saacsecondary@monumentacademy.net for details.

- The board heard a presentation on the upcoming graduation activities, reviewed the gala and other fundraising activities, got an update on the enrollment numbers, and reviewed progress on academic goals.
- The board approved a Reimbursement Resolution to reimburse itself for \$15 million in capital expenses ahead of bond refinancing. Interim CFO Glenn Gustafson highlighted a \$26 million balloon payment due June 2026 and plans to refinance \$60 million in bonds to consolidate campus debt and fund East Campus projects.
- The board unanimously signed a letter to the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA)

demanding rules barring boys from competing in girls’ sports, warning of escalation to state and federal authorities if demands are unmet.

- After an executive session on property acquisition, the board approved a Letter of Intent to purchase Grace Best Education Center for \$100,000, directing Vinchattle to present it to D38 Interim Superintendent Amber Whetstine.
- The board approved an updated Staff Handbook, incorporating audit-recommended wording on the Seven Tenets, revising Title IX and leave policies, and updating renamed policy references.
- Clinton announced that board applications closed in March with only one applicant, Craig Carle, eliminating the need for an election. The board unanimously re-elected Carle by acclamation.
- Graham shared a community letter on House Bill 25-1213, which mandates that MA accommodate students’ chosen names, pronouns, and cross-dressing,

while defining misgendering and dead-naming as discriminatory. He urged families to engage by signing petitions, contacting officials, and preparing to testify. Graham stated that if Gov. Jared Polis signs the bill, the board will discuss next steps, but he encouraged a veto if Polis plans a presidential run.

- Vinchattle provided the board with a first draft of policy AEP-MA Educational Philosophy for its review. It describes MA’s philosophy and instructional approach and emphasizes parental involvement. The policy references several supporting documents.

The MA School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, May 8, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Campus. The agenda and packet are available at bit.ly/ma-boarddocs.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Monument Town Council, April 7 and 21

Monument Town Council mourns loss of Jim Romanello

By Chris Jeub

The Monument Town Council began its April 21 session by solemnly acknowledging the recent passing of Councilmember Jim Romanello, who had served the community with dedication since his 2018 election. In a moment of reflection, all councilmembers shared memories of Romanello’s commitment to transparent governance and constituent outreach, and held a brief moment of silence in his honor.

Everyone from the dais remembered Romanello warmly. Mayor Mitch LaKind lamented, “I’m missing a leg to kick under the dais tonight,” recalling that after they ran against each other for mayor in 2022 Romanello confided he was glad he hadn’t won, and added, “I’m going to miss him.” Councilmember Laura Kronick, choking back tears, said, “We hugged, bantered, argued, and laughed. Farewell, my friend.”

Marco Fiorito reflected on Romanello’s dedication and spirit of cooperation. Mayor Pro Tem Steve King observed, “We started out on opposite sides of things, but we ended up coming together. Whatever we disagreed on, he would always come back and pat me on the back.” Interim Town Manager Madeline VanDenHoek noted, “He always wanted the best for the town,” and Councilmember Sana Abbott added, “I will miss that raspy laugh of his.”

The council announced plans to place a commemorative bench along the Santa Fe Trail in his honor.

Comprehensive PUD Amendment, Plat and Site Plan for Triview water tank

In a single unified action, the council approved all three steps necessary to expand the Triview Promontory Pointe Water Tank Facility. First, Ordinance 07-2025 amended the Sanctuary Pointe Phase 3 Planned Unit



Above: Flags were flown at half-staff for five days in Jim Romanello's honor. Photo by Michael Weinfeld.

Development (PUD) to reassign 1.1 acres of open space for district use. By rezoning that newly created lot from PUD to public, the town formally consolidated it with the existing 1.37-acre tank site, creating a contiguous 2.47-acre parcel capable of housing a second 1.5-million-gallon tank.

Next, Resolution 22-2025 ratified the Final Plat for Triview Utilities Subdivision, subdividing Sanctuary Pointe Filing 8 into a 1.1-acre Lot 1 and a 24.4-acre remainder, then merging Lot 1 with the existing district property to legally define the expanded site.

Finally, Resolution 23-2025 ap-

proved the associated Site Plan, which includes new landscape buffers, fencing upgrades and construction details for the additional tank. The council emphasized the importance of the added screening along adjacent residential areas and unanimously endorsed the technical design elements.

Title 2 Code

Repeal and Readoption

By a 6-1 vote, the council enacted Ordinance 08-2025: a wholesale repeal and readoption of Title 2 (Administration & Personnel) to conform local code with the November 2022 Home Rule Charter and to streamline de-

partment structures under the town manager. Among the changes, Police Department rules were realigned under manager authority, finance director duties were updated, and antiquated provisions—like obsolete municipal judge bond requirements—were removed. Councilmember Sana Abbott cast the lone dissenting vote, questioning whether some Charter references might complicate future amendments.

Old Denver Road

Annexation Proceedings

Resolution 25-2025 initiated annexation of the Old Denver Road area (Annexation Petition 24-2025), finding the petition in substantial compliance with C.R.S. § 31-12-107. The council authorized staff to prepare the formal annexation ordinance and to schedule the required public hearing later this spring. Proponents noted the area’s adjacency to existing town services and its potential to support future residential development.

Loop Water Authority

IGA Amendment

Continuing regional cooperation, Resolution 27-2025 amended the intergovernmental agreement establishing the Loop Water Authority. Director of Public Works Thomas Tharnish explained that the revised terms address voting thresholds and cost-sharing formulas among member districts. Though councilmembers rejected the original proposal in the April 7 meeting, their concerns were addressed in the April 21 meeting and unanimously approved the updated Loop Water Authority IGA Amendment.

Review of Draft

Financial Policies

In the final discussion of the evening, Finance Director Jennifer Phillips presented proposed updates to the town’s Financial Policies Manual. Key changes include raising the target for gener-

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