

Monument Board of Trustees, Dec. 17

2013 budget and appropriation approved

By Jim Kendrick

On Dec. 17, the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) completed the public hearings on the 2013 budget and 2013 appropriation public hearings that were advertised for Dec. 3, but were continued when three trustees did not attend. The board unanimously approved Town Treasurer Pamela Smith's proposed budget option that would provide an across the board 3 percent cost of living raise for town employees along with a 1 percent performance increase with fully funded leased capital equipment and projects, using capital leases for most of these items.

The number of town employees who attended the Dec. 17 meeting was far less than the number who attended the Dec. 3 meeting to learn what kind of raise might be offered after several years without cost of living increases. All seven board members were present at the meeting.

Mayor Travis Easton's counterproposal to implement a 4 percent pay increase in 2013, based solely on individual employee performance evaluations with no across-the-board component, failed to achieve consensus. On Dec. 3, Smith told Easton that having no across-the-board cost of living increase for any employee for yet another year would be punitive.

See the Dec. 3 BOT article on the facing page for more details on the various optional 2013 budgets that were proposed.

There was no proposed method offered, discussed, or approved for how the 1 percent pot of money for performance-based pay increases will be divided among the employees in each department by their respective department heads, particularly in the department that has only one employee, nor how this pot of money will be divided between the various departments. No timetable was set for when the performance-based pay raise policy and procedures will be developed or approved, or a determination if the performance pay increases would be retroactive for all of 2013 once the board decides how they will be awarded.

At the start of the meeting, Mayor Easton asked those in attendance to pause for a moment of silence to pay respect to the victims and survivors of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

Trustees' comments

Smith answered questions from the trustees regarding the two budget options she presented on Dec. 3. The second option included an across the board 2 percent cost of living raise with a 1 percent performance increase with no leased capital equipment or projects funding. Smith advised the board that it could come up with any combination from her or Easton's proposals. She noted that her pay is separate because she works directly for the board, and Town Manager Cathy Green has her own contract with the board.

After the question-and-answer discussion was completed, there was consensus to have a 3 percent cost of living increase for all the staff members with 1 percent of each department's overall salary base available to department heads for individually determined performance-based pay increase starting sometime in 2013. Trustee Jeff Bornstein said the various staff employee teams should form their own group objectives for the performance-based pay policy.

No comments were offered from the public during this discussion.

Monument Police Chief Jacob Shirk addressed the board in regards to new marijuana laws. Shirk stated that the district attorney had called him to advise that the town currently has no ordinances regarding town control of marijuana following voter approval of Amendment 64 to the state constitution. Shirk said the attorney general stated the town may want to address the issue by adopting an ordinance. He distributed a copy of the Greenwood

marijuana ordinances for board review.

After a lengthy technical discussion, there was board consensus that a new town ordinance should be drafted to prohibit the open consumption of marijuana and to prohibit retail sales of recreational marijuana within town limits. Chief Shirk and Town Attorney Gary Shupp said they would draft the requested marijuana ordinance to present to the board at a public hearing during the Jan. 7 board meeting.

No comments were offered from the public during this discussion.

Public hearings

There were no public comments during the open portion of the hearing on the 2013 budget. The board unanimously approved the ordinance for the budget option with the 3 percent cost of living increase.

There were no public comments during the open portion of the hearing on the associated 2013 appropriation for the budget option with the 3 percent cost of living increase. The board unanimously approved the ordinance for the appropriation option with the 3 percent cost of living increase and the 1 percent performance increase.

The public hearing item for a request for de-annexation of a 5-acre lot in Sanctuary Pointe owned by Classic Homes President Joe Loidolt was postponed at Loidolt's request. Tom Kassawara, director of Development Services, said Loidolt "was having an issue with the county regarding water supply and until he gets a firm answer from them he'd prefer not to de-annex only to figure out that he doesn't have any water."

Financial reports

The board unanimously approved three payments over \$5,000:

- \$129,233 to Triview Metropolitan District for October sales tax, November motor vehicle tax, and November Regional Building sales tax.
- \$6,450 to Swingle Lawn, Tree, and Landscape Service for the Christmas tree lights installed on Second Street.
- \$5,404 to J3 Engineering Consultants for phase II rehabilitation work on the Monument Lake dam.

Smith reported that town sales tax through October was \$186,000 (or 8.8 percent) higher than the amount budgeted, up \$16,600 from September.

Smith presented a report to the board regarding the 30 hours per month saved for three employees by using Payment Service Network for collection of water bills. About \$30 per month for paper and postage is being saved by electronic billing for 54 customers. Smith stated she was pleased with Payment Service but will continue to look into other systems to ensure the town has the best option available.

Downtown Development Director Vicki Mynhier briefed the board on a proposal to create a downtown business improvement district. She noted that only about half of the 51 downtown merchants are members of the private Historic Monument Merchants Association. An affirmative vote of at least 51 percent of the landowners and business owners must vote in favor of the district before it can be created. There are about 1,200 such districts in the United States.

Mynhier will determine if there is enough support for this kind of special district.

Staff reports

Public Works Director Tom Tharnish reported that a new sidewalk had been installed alongside the Town Hall property bordering Beacon Lite Road. Monument water

production for November 2012 was about 6.9 million gallons, about 559,000 gallons (8.1 percent) more than in 2011.

Some of the items Chief Shirk reported were:

- Detective Steve Lontz was investigating an armed robbery that occurred at the Walgreens on Highway 105.
- Monument's tactical team was called to handle an armed and barricaded gunman that had been breaking into vehicles at the Walmart. The suspect ran from responding officers while armed with an AR-style rifle. The suspect barricaded himself in the outside loading dock area of Kohl's. The suspect, with the assistance of a hostage negotiator from the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, eventually put the weapon down and surrendered. Shirk thanked the Palmer Lake Police Department, Colorado State Patrol, Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Department, and the Sheriff's Office for working together during this very intense and dangerous incident.
- Shirk assisted the YMCA with their Cookies and Milk Santa Program
- Shirk stated the Santa on Patrol event was very successful and read a thank-you email to the board from a local citizen.

The meeting went into executive session at 8 p.m. to receive legal advice regarding litigation. The board emerged from executive session and immediately adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m. in Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. Meetings are normally held on the first and third Monday of the month. Information: 884-8017.

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