

Triview Metropolitan District, April 9

Water and wastewater rates increased

By Lisa Hatfield and Jim Kendrick

On April 9, the Triview Metropolitan District board finalized a new water and wastewater rate structure that was continued from the March 12 board meeting and reviewed applications for an interim operations supervisor. Questions arose concerning the balance that will remain in the wastewater budget line item after the second-quarter payment is made to Donala Water and Sanitation, so this payment was withheld pending accounting clarification.

Water and sewer rates increased

The Triview board unanimously approved a new set of residential and commercial water and wastewater base rates and tiered volume charges. The new rates became effective for the May 1 billing cycle and will first appear on water bills mailed to customers in early June.

The rate increases were designed to help reduce the previously projected annual Triview water and wastewater enterprise fund deficits that ranged from about \$101,000 to over \$2.7 million through 2018.

The residential volume charges used since 2008 (per www.triviewmetro.com/rates.html) were:

- \$2.87 per 1,000 gallons used up to 6,000 gallons.
- \$3.60 per 1,000 gallons used from 6,001 to 20,000 gallons.
- \$5.25 per 1,000 gallons used above 20,001 gallons.

District Manager Valerie Remington stated that the existing residential base rate was \$11 a month for water and \$24.48 for wastewater, plus a Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority (CWRPDA) fee of \$5, for a total base rate of \$40.48 per month. She proposed raising the base wastewater fee to \$33.74.

These figures only apply to a basic residential 3/4-inch tap, according to the Triview rate chart currently displayed at www.triviewmetro.com/rates.html.

Operations Supervisor Nick Harris added that the base wastewater fee for each size of residential or commercial tap would increase by the same amount, \$9.24.

There was a general discussion about how the CWRPDA fee is currently used for a cash reserve in case Triview does not meet CWRPDA loan covenants for the \$7 million loan.

Effective at the beginning of May 2013 billing cycle, the new residential water volume charge rates will use five tiers. For a 3/4 -inch tap, use rates will be:

- \$3.25 per 1,000 gallons up to 6,000 gallons
- \$4.04 per 1,000 gallons from 6,001 to 20,000 gallons
- \$5.82 per 1,000 gallons used from 20,001 to 30,000 gallons
- \$6.57 per 1,000 gallons used from 30,001 to 40,000 gallons
- \$7.32 per 1,000 gallons used above 40,001 gallons

The board decided to eliminate the current \$5 CWRPDA monthly fee from the rate structure and raise the monthly residential water base rate for a 3/4-inch tap to \$16.

The approved new base rates for a residential 3/4-inch tap are \$33.74 per month for wastewater and \$16 per month for water, for a total of \$49.74 per month.

The volume charge for all commercial, office, and industrial customers will increase from \$3.31 to \$3.72 per 1,000 gallons. There is just one tier for commercial use.

Director Steve Hurd noted that this increase still does not address the enterprise fund problems that will

arise due to using tap fees to pay for operations and maintenance costs rather than for new required water and wastewater infrastructure capital costs or debt reduction. Triview's water attorney, Chris Cummins of Felt, Monson & Culichia, said the board still needs to address the large remaining portion of the \$2.7 million capital fund deficit for 2014 not addressed by this rate increase.

Secretary/Treasurer Bob Eskridge said, "We're still well below Monument and Palmer Lake." He added, "I'm just astounded at how high Monument's (rates) are." Vice President Tom Harder said, "You don't have to water every day, twice a day. Remington noted that Triview will still allow watering three times a week while Monument only allows watering twice per week.

Director Steve Cox stated that the board needs to explain not giving back the \$5 CWRPDA fund balance to customers. President Robert Fisher said he would work with staff to write an explanation of the inability to refund the balance of the CWRPDA fee cash reserve to customers. This information, along with a copy of the new rates schedule, will be inserted in Triview water bills for April use that will be mailed at the beginning of May.

The board will discuss the 2014 rate increases as an agenda item during the May 14 board meetings as an action necessary to pay for operations and maintenance entirely from monthly water and wastewater fee revenues, a requirement for a Colorado enterprise fund such as Triview's.

Financial report

The board approved two disbursements over \$5,000:

- \$26,380 to JDS Hydro for engineering for the Sanctuary Point water system expansion.
- \$10,766 to Colorado Water Well Pump Service to lower the pump in Well A-7 by 168 feet to 1,638 feet.

However, the board withheld approval of the second-quarter wastewater treatment facility payment of \$110,130, which was due to the Donala Water and Sanitation District on May 1. The board was concerned since it appeared that after this payment, only about \$151,000 would be left in the 2013 budget to make two more payments of about \$110,000 each. President Fisher asked District Manager Remington to "clarify the budget" with Donala.

Remington presented year-to-date (YTD) account balances as of Feb. 28:

- Cash position - \$14.6 million, up \$88,373 from January, mostly due to sales and property tax increases.
- District general fund revenue - \$426,000 (10 percent of YTD budget).
- District general fund expenses - \$248,000 (6 percent of YTD budget).

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