

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Oct. 15

Third electric rate increase in a year drives water rate increase

By Jim Kendrick

On Oct. 15, General Manager Kip Petersen briefed the Donala Water and Sanitation District (WSD) board on the announcement by Mountain View Electric Association that there would be a third 9 percent commercial rate increase in July 2016 following the July 2015 and January 2016 9 percent rate increases previously reported. The cumulative exponential effect of these three rate increases is a 29.5 percent rate increase from June 30, 2015 to July 1, 2016. Petersen proposed a 4 percent across-the-board increase for the tiered water use fee structure, effective Jan. 1, 2016, but no increases in the \$30 monthly wastewater rate or the \$25 monthly water service rate.

Note: Although regular meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month, the next regular meeting will not be held until Thursday, Dec. 10 in the district conference room at 15850 Holbein Drive and will include the 2016 annual budget hearing so that this approved budget can be submitted to the state by the Dec. 15 deadline. The next board meeting will be a workshop, held at 9 a.m. on Nov. 17, in the district conference room at 15850 Holbein Drive. Information: 488-3603 or www.donalawater.org.

Petersen also noted the recent increase in water sales revenue due to increased irrigation resulting from the decline in recent rainfall. In September the district produced almost 39 million gallons of billable water compared to 28 million gallons in September a year ago. Revenues to date were still 6 percent short of the amount budgeted. Expenditures for 2015 have been held to 7 percent less than budgeted, even though some high priority capital projects have been initiated. He said the other postponed projects will be added to the 2016 budget to take advantage of a low-interest state loan from the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority. Board President Bill George praised the staff's "astute financial management. Well done."

2016 draft budget presented

Some of the other factors Pe-

tersen emphasized regarding his 2016 budget proposal were:

- Colorado Springs Utilities will increase the rate it charges Donala by 4.9 percent for transporting and treating Donala's Willow Creek Ranch renewable surface water for direct distribution to Donala customers.
- Tap fee revenue from development will be significantly less than in 2015.
- Vendor rates were budgeted to increase by about 3 percent in 2016.

It is still the Donala board's goal that annual drinking water and wastewater revenue should be sufficient to pay all annual costs of drinking water and wastewater services respectively so that each operation can become self-sustaining and achieve enterprise status.

Financial reports

Petersen noted that a payment of \$6,400 had been made for Donala's share of a Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority preliminary design study on joint water storage in a common reservoir as well as exchange between these northern El Paso County water entities:

- Town of Monument
- Town of Palmer Lake
- Donala WSD
- Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District
- Triview Metropolitan District
- Forest Lakes Metro District

Total expenditures to date for the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Fa-

cility were about 17 percent less (\$223,000) than the budgeted amount for the first three quarters of 2015, while operating revenue was roughly equal to the amount budgeted through September. Petersen said that the cost of some of this year's individual repairs has been much higher than usual, and Chief Waste Plant Operator Terri Ladouceur has postponed some routine projects to have enough money left in the budget should more unexpected high-cost repairs need to be made before 2016.

Petersen stated that the 2016 budget for the waste plant would have higher contingency funding than in 2015 as well as a more comprehensive long-term equipment repair and replacement program that is being prepared by consulting engineer Roger Sams

of GMS Inc. Also, about \$20,000 will be spent on the Doral Way pipeline project before the end of the year.

Academy Water and Sanitation District waste-

water IGA approved

The Donala board unanimously approved an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the Donala and Academy districts to have Donala provide all wastewater service for Academy. A

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