

Meter Size (Inches)	2013 Base Rate (\$/mo.)+	APPROVED 2016 Base Rate (\$/mo.)	Usage Block (Gallons)	2013 Rate (\$/kgal)	APPROVED 2016 Rate (\$/kgal)
0.75	8.80	31.00	<b>Residential and Commercial Rates</b>		
1.00	9.00	34.67	3,000 and under	4.99	incl in base
1.50	10.00	72.89	3,001-6,000	4.99	6.00
2.00	10.80	126.09	6,001-12,000	5.99	9.00
3.00	18.50	280.81	12,001-24,000	6.99	11.00
4.00	23.70	494.62	24,001 and more	7.99	12.25
			<b>Bulk Water Rates</b>		
			3,000 and under	4.99	10.33
			3,001-6,000	4.99	12.33
			6,001-12,000	5.99	14.33
			12,001-24,000	6.99	16.33
			24,001 and more	7.99	18.33

**Above and right:** At the Mar. 7 Monument Board of Trustees meeting, the trustees approved a water rates increase proposal. These tables show the approved increases in base rates and volumetric rates for residential and commercial customers in Monument west of I-25. *Information courtesy of Town of Monument board packet and website information.* + 2013 rates from [www.municode.com/library/co/monument/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](http://www.municode.com/library/co/monument/codes/code_of_ordinances). Tap fees are not addressed in this proposal.

they had been approved.

By comparison, the current 2015 base rates (approved in 2013 and replaced on March 7) covered only 4.7 percent of operations, management, debt collection, and capital fund projects expenses, leaving 95 percent of revenue to be generated by volumetric rates, putting the town "at very extreme risk if something catastrophic were to happen," Tharnish said.

Other features of the March 7 proposal included:

- Monthly base rate includes first 1,000 gallons of water
- Three-quarter-inch tap base rate increase from \$8.80 to \$31
- The 1 1/2-inch tap base rate increase from \$10 to \$72.89 in 2016 (and \$135.78 in 2017)
- (Annual increases of 9.5 percent through 2021)
- (Almost \$435,000 transferred from general fund would be paid back by the water fund in ten years instead of six)
- (Reserve fund of \$500,000 for emergencies would be re-established)

(Since the ordinance was amended before being voted on, the items listed above in parentheses were not approved or will take more (undetermined) time to accomplish.)

Tharnish referred to an email sent to the trustees and town staff by Greg Coopman, saying that Coopman's calculations criticizing the town's projections were not accurate. He added that Coopman's proposal addressed the needs of fixed- and low-income people, but made no effort to benefit the business community, which is also heavily impacted due to larger meter sizes, and it was spread out too far to meet the four goals. Tharnish said in his 16 years with the town, "staff did not direct the board" but instead "provided the best information and advice to the board so they could make an informed decision."

Five people spoke against the March 7 proposal. Their comments included:

- Coopman – The new proposal is an attempt to deceive the residents of this community; it is actually higher than the original proposal (at the end of six years). No data has been provided to support the need for any increase. The staff was directed to provide multiple solutions (but just one was presented March 7). I am more disgusted now than I was before.
- John Dominowski – I have asked town staff what is the amount of the total impact on town budget and water department. Can anyone tell me how much will be collected in first fiscal year if this increase is in effect? A lot of things being said are hitting us the wrong way and we are angry about it.
- AB Tellez – In six years, I will be paying an extra \$14,000 a year, and my business will be in the red. We the customers have no fault; all we have done is paid the bill that was given to us.
- Tellez – I asked the town for help on changing landscaping requirements to xeriscaping so I would not

waste water, but I have gotten no direction from the town.

- Tellez – I did my own Excel worksheet including 2015 numbers people are currently paying, which the town has not done. I conservatively calculated how much revenue this would generate. What are you going to do with all this extra revenue?
- Haley Chapin, Tri-Lakes Cares executive director – The grants we currently get are going toward energy use, not water use, and it takes a little while to get new financial support. I strongly urge that we figure out how to get the "round up" program working very quickly, or we will have people coming forward for assistance before we are able to help them.

Trustees' comments against the rate increase proposal included:

- Jeff Bornstein – It was my understanding we would see multiple proposals after the Feb. 22 workshop, but we didn't.... I am not sold as a trustee.
- John Howe – The "round up" fund won't work if people who are concerned about paying their bill in the first place choose not to round up their bills. Tharnish said we are not charging enough to cover our costs; that is scary. Ms. Smith is looking at the requirement to pay money to the general fund back or not, but we have not heard the answer yet.

Trustee Jeff Smith suggested a compromise that "could stop the bleeding but not commit ourselves to an unnecessary trajectory," and the board could re-evaluate the numbers each year and confirm whether the rate structure was working or needed further increases as originally suggested. He made a motion that the proposed water rates vote only include the 2016 proposed rates, without the automatic annual increases of 9.5 percent through 2021, until positively affirmed by the board as they reviewed the budget each year.

The amended ordinance was approved by a vote of 3-2. Bornstein and Howe voted no.

Since only the first year's rate increases were approved, and it is not guaranteed that future boards will implement the suggested five more years of 9.5 percent increases through 2021, so the projections for the financial future of the water enterprise fund that Koger, Tharnish, and Lowe presented with their proposal are at risk.

The original goal was to fund \$1.4 million/year in operations, \$300,000/year in debt service, and \$1.77 million in repair and replacement capital costs from 2016-2021, and would have paid back 60 percent of the general fund payback by 2021.

**Public hearing on annexation set**

Howe acted as mayor pro-tem for the discussion of a reso-

lution to set a public hearing date for annexation of two parcels of land owned by Mayor Rafael Dominguez, who recused himself from discussion or voting on the issue.

Planning Director Larry Manning explained that Dominguez, the applicant for annexation, owned two parcels of land southeast of the southern terminus of Synthes Avenue and wanted to begin the process of applying to have them annexed into the town. The first step in the

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