

Monument Board of Trustees, March 4

Treasurer put on leave; residency answers demanded; CSU explains regionalization idea

By Allison Robenstein

There were some surprises at the March 4 Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting when the town treasurer was put on leave pending an investigation and Trustee Laurie Clark made motions concerning trustees' code of conduct as well as their ability to litigate against the town. She also asked the board to vote to remove Trustee Jim Romanello from his seat. During the meeting, two officers were recognized for their outstanding service to the community and there were presentations from Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) and School District 38.

Mayor Pro Tem Kelley Elliott and Trustee Romanello were noted absent.

Treasurer put on leave amid investigation

At the beginning of the meeting, Trustee Greg Coopman made a motion to remove the January 2019 Financial Report and the Finance Department Annual Report from the evening's meeting agenda, which was unanimously approved. Town Treasurer Pamela Smith was at the meeting to make these presentations.

At the very end of the meeting, Interim Town Manager Mike Foreman asked the board to approve paid administrative leave for Smith pending the outcome of an ongoing criminal investigation by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.

Background: At the Dec. 3 BOT meeting, the board finally appointed Smith as treasurer after postponing her reappointment throughout 2018. The board was made aware of the investigation at the same meeting after receiving a letter from the Sheriff's Office asking that financial records be retained as part of an investigation. See <https://ocn.me/v19n1.htm#mbot>.

Foreman noted there were no specific charges or findings associated with the investigation. No members of the public spoke during this public hearing item, and the board unanimously approved Smith's administrative leave.

Surprise motions will be discussed at next meeting

During board comments, Clark made several motions with the intention of asking the board to vote on the spot. Trustee Ron Stephens asked Clark why she hadn't made these requests during board authorizations or as a planned agenda item as is the norm, but Clark said she was told board comments were where such requests should be made. She asked how items are placed on the agenda.

The board consensus was to review any motions before voting. Town Attorney Joseph Rivera also asked to review the motions before the next meeting to ensure they are legally sound, asking Clark to forward her requests. See related March 18 BOT meeting on page 17.

Note: In 2016, the BOT permanently added the "board authorization items" section to the agenda so that board consensus could be reached about what items to put on future agendas. See www.ocn.me/v16n7.htm#mbot-0620.

Clark made the following motions to discuss:

- Rescinding resolution 12-2018 establishing board standards of conduct. The resolution was approved unanimously at the March 18, 2018 meeting and is based on a resolution originally approved in 2017. See www.ocn.me/v18n4.htm#mbot0319.
- Rescinding town municipal code 2-04-020 section C which reads, "No elected or appointed official shall be engaged in any form of litigation against the town." Clark said this is in direct conflict with state law, since it is the trustees' fiduciary duty to bring possible misconduct to the attention of the town.
- Removing Romanello, saying he violated town municipal code 02-04-020 Section A. Clark claimed Romanello had not lived in Monument 12 months prior to the election and further alleged he is no longer a town resident, which would cause him to lose his seat.

The board voted unanimously to discuss these items at its next meeting. Rivera asked Clark to provide documentation for all her requests so he could review them before the next meeting.

Police recognize officers

Monument police Cpl. Michael Case and Officer Bob Steine were recognized by Chief Jacob Shirk for their dedication to the town's safety. Case was officially promoted to corporal after scoring highest on the department's recent test for the rank. Foreman said he was happy to see the chief promote from within. Steine received the chief's commendation for his dedication and tireless efforts to improve the department.

St. Peter requests zoning change and replat

St. Peter the Rock Chapel and Ministry Center requested a zoning change for its northern parking lot and the adjoining lot at 155 Jefferson St. In order to combine multiple lots, they all must be the same zoning. Currently the parking lot is zoned R-2 or single-family residential, and they would like it to be zoned as B-business to match the chapel building that had formerly been a toy shop.

The Monument Planning Commission heard this request at its Feb. 13 meeting and unanimously approved it, as did the BOT. See www.ocn.me/v19n3.htm#mpc.

Presentation of NMCI project

CSU Project Engineer Jenny Bishop, senior program engineer for the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor Project (NMCIP) provided an overview of the project. Public Works Director Tom Tharnish and Foreman have been attending meetings to learn more about the project, which is being developed by CSU to support the City for Champions U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) Gateway Visitor Center, which will require wastewater treatment assistance.

Because of this, CSU is working to get a utility easement through Air Force property to build a gravity-fed sewer line to J.D. Phillips Water Resource Reclamation Facility, eliminating up to three electricity-hungry sewage lift stations as well as the current USAFA treatment

EASTER SUNDAY

AT TRI-LAKES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

7AM9AM11AM

20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument, CO

Holy Week Schedule – tlumc.org/easter – 719.488.1365