

Donala Water and Sanitation District, May 16

Rules and regs revisited, exceedance corrected

By Jennifer Kaylor

In a regularly scheduled annual review May 16, District Manager Kip Petersen recommended changes to the district's rules and regulations and reported on factors leading to an ammonia exceedance in the wastewater treatment process.

President Ken Judd was excused. Vice President Ed Houle chaired the meeting.

Changes add clarity, establish responsibility

Petersen reviewed recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations of the Donala Water and Sanitation District, El Paso County, Colorado. With minor modifications, the board unanimously approved the amendments. The revised document may be viewed at https://www.donalawater.org/images/docs/Rules_and_Regulations_Revised_Adopted_May_2019.pdf

Under the standard fees section, the availability of service fee due date was changed to April 20 of each year. This annual fee is paid by owners of undeveloped, or vacant, platted lots that have either water or wastewater service within 100 feet of the property. Another clarification stipulated that payment agreements—agreements between Donala and customers with delinquent water and/or wastewater payments—may not exceed 90 days and are limited to once per year. Reproduction fees were specified as \$25 per hour for staff time and 25 cents per page of copied material.

As part of the "Unauthorized Hydrant Use Penalty," the words, "Criminal charges may be considered" were added to reinforce that district-owned fire hydrants are to be used only by Donala and fire department personnel.

With respect to privacy information, the district may provide customer financial information only to "persons of interest" who are identified by the customer at initiation of service or later in writing. The policy was amended to include landlords and property managers as persons of interest.

Expanding on the district's right to potentially require a grease trap or interceptor on a commercial or industrial property, the policy included language to clarify that the property owner is responsible for maintaining the device.

Policies pertaining to customer responsibilities drew a comment about property owners possibly being responsible for infrastructure that was in public domain. Under the section "Ownership of Infrastructure and Devices," the amended policy stipulates "Sanitary sewer service lines from the sewer main to the sewer stub out at the home, are owned by and are the maintenance responsibility of the property owner." Petersen explained that this language changes Donala's standard to meet the standards of other water and wastewater districts and that Donala is willing to work with homeowners on a case-by-case basis.

Similarly, the first three sentences of the "Water/Sewer Service Line Maintenance Procedure" section were amended to clarify responsibility: "The District is responsible for water and sewer mains. Sewer service lines, from the sewer main to the structure are the responsibility of the property owner. The maintenance for the water service lines from inside the home to the curb stop is the responsibility of the homeowner or builder." A final correction to the same section clarified that, "If a TV inspection by a 'roofer' service determines the clog or break is beyond the

sewer tap or in the sewer main, the District will assist in confirming the actual location and cause and assume responsibility for repairs where appropriate."

The final revision to the rules and regulations simply updated the date and signatories.

Wastewater treatment plant in upset condition

Petersen reported that the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRW-WTF) has been in an "upset condition" for the past 60 days. He had reported on the situation at the May board meeting at which time the excessive growth of M. Parvacella bacteria—a result of fats, oils, and grease being present in the wastewater flows—was named as the culprit causing the loss of a different but vital bacteria in the wastewater treatment process. Through careful monitoring, Chief Waste Plant Operator Terri Ladouceur eventually corrected the bacterial imbalance, but the problem caused the facility to exceed its 30-day average for ammonia. The district reported the exceedance to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and outlined its corrective actions.

It was also discovered that Triview Metropolitan District—one-third owner of the UMCRWWTF—had cleaned a holding tank and the backwash from the cleaning process delayed the recovery of the appropriate bacteria at the treatment facility. Petersen confirmed that Triview established a plan to prevent additional setbacks in the future.

Drought report best in years

The drought report, provided by the United States Drought Monitor, designated a small sliver along Colorado's southern border as Moderate Drought and remaining areas as drought free or abnormally dry. "The winter snows and the continuing patterns of cooler temperatures and more moisture are helping keep us out of drought. The 90-day forecast is still projecting cooler and wetter [weather] as we enter July," Petersen added.

In a related matter, Petersen reported on the status of the district's renewable water resource at Willow Creek Ranch. Donala staff visited the ranch in late April and reported positively on the snowpack in the area. The renewable water supply allows the district to rely less on non-renewable water pumped from its wells. The water that Donala produced in April balanced out at 59.8 percent from Willow Creek Ranch and 40.2 percent from the well system.

Other reports and updates

Petersen reviewed financial reports and provided updates that included:

- Petersen expressed satisfaction with current revenue and expenditures in comparison to remaining budgeted amounts.
- At the May 1 Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority meeting, participants proposed ideas to supplant revenue lost due to a reduction from \$30 million to \$10 million in state funding intended to support Colorado's State Water Plan. Ideas included a beverage container tax, a surcharge on individual water bills (this solution was low on possibilities), a sports-betting tax, and other potential sources of tax revenue.
- Design plans for the groundwater contaminate mitigation removal facility continued to progress. Requests for bids had been sent to multiple contractors, and a selection was expected to be made by the end of the week.

The meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

The next board meeting will be held June 20, 1:30 p.m. at the district office located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs. The directors meet in the district office conference room. Board meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month. More information is available by calling (719)488-3603 or accessing www.donalawater.org.

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