

into the 2F budget, I looked at what my colleagues were talking about nationwide and throughout the state."

Mayor Don Wilson seemed a bit surprised asking, "Have we ever discussed this 10 percent [raise]?", then saying, "I don't recall this ten percent coming up before. It feels like a bait and switch kind of thing."

Hemingway didn't fully answer the mayor's question, simply saying recent salary surveys showed disparities between the town and other municipalities early on.

While all other employees would have received a 5 percent raise, the officers will see an automatic 10 percent raise. Stephens said he would be in favor of backpedaling ballot language promised to the voters, suggesting rather than hiring eight officers only bringing in seven officers providing the raise in police salaries. Fore-

man again said the 10 percent raise is built into the 2F funds, so the town can still hire the eight. Wilson suggested maybe the problem with losing officers is the industry itself versus salary levels, asking if there is any proof that salary increases will help to retain police.

Foreman and Hemingway consistently dwelled on keeping police officers, but Public Works Director Tom Tharnish said he also has trouble keeping employees. Hemingway pointed out that the two departments work well together.

Several town employees who spoke during public comments also seemed surprised that the police will be getting double the pay raise that they will receive. Assistant Public Works Director Stephen Sheffield, and Monument Landscape Supervisor Cassie Olgren said they appreciate the need for competitive police department salaries, but other

departments, including the public works department employees, see salaries far below those of municipalities surrounding the town.

Foreman said the town could give all employees a 10 percent raise with a reduction in the unreserved balance. He noted town employees fall into a merit-based system.

Hemingway complained that Monument officers must pay their way to the police academy, similar to someone paying for college and then entering the workforce, including taking out loans to pay for the program.

Later in the meeting though, he noted the El Paso County Sheriff's Office provide supplemental assistance for some or all the town's officers who attend the police academy through in-kind services.

To show her support of the police department Trustee Darcy Schoening said she

spent the Friday before the election on a lengthy ride along with an officer in uniform. She admitted, "We even knocked on doors for 2F." Since 1939, employees are barred from such actions as it could be misconstrued as coercion, especially by an officer in uniform and a trustee. A second officer spoke later during public comments saying he also knocked on voters' doors to convince them to vote for the ballot measures but did not say whether he was on or off duty at the time.

During public comment Joe Lusty asked again how the historic Triview intergovernmental agreement (IGA) would not affect the 2F revenues. Since its inception, Triview Metropolitan District has received half of all town sales tax. Lusty said, "I don't know how you can do that legally, but there must be a method." Wilson said Triview would

have to ignore the voters who approved 2F.

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

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Merry Christmas

During this holiday season, we wish you all the best.

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