

p.m. The next Donald Wescott Fire District Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see www.wescottfire.org.

Correction

In our March 2021 issue, OCN reported that only one candidate had been interviewed for the interim

fire chief position. In fact, two candidates were interviewed. After the initial round of interviews, one candidate withdrew his name from consideration. OCN regrets the er-

ror.

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Monument Board of Trustees, April 5

Home rule a possibility for Monument; land uses pass

By Allison Robenstein

During the April 5 Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting, the board heard a presentation from Town Attorney Andrew Richie on home rule. Three police officers were sworn in and ordinances were hit and miss in terms of approval. The board received an I-25 Gap Project update, too.

Home rule process

Richie explained to the board that Monument is currently a statutory town regarding local government methods. In Colorado, municipalities default to statutory rule, which limits powers to only those granted by state statutes. Home rule allows towns to create legislation for local concerns.

Richie said the process toward

home rule is calendar driven and relies heavily on residents' support. Voters would have to elect a charter commission made of nine to 21 residents who would write a new town charter. This would supersede any non-regulated concerns, but state laws will always weigh heavier than the charter. The charter may not supersede state laws.

Once elected, the charter commission has 180 days to submit a charter. The BOT would then publish it and give notice of an election. Some examples of the flexibility allowed within the charter include:

- Identifying the form of government and clarification of powers for the mayor, board members, and town manager.

- Categorizing procedures for elections and setting election dates.
- Modifying or eliminating term limits for mayor and the board.
- Creating additional taxes including entertainment, tourism, or lodging taxes.
- Revising budget procedures.

Richie cautioned that restrictive or poorly written charters can be difficult to live with and even more difficult to change, because they require a vote of the residents. Richie said home rule may give the town more governmental powers than some residents think is necessary.

Richie said most towns that choose this form of government see the biggest areas of change in finan-

cial wellbeing and community development. It also allows for more flexibility in land use and zoning.

Resident Nancy Swearingin said, "I'm ambivalent either way," regarding the possible change. She suggested government entities that have become home rule towns present the benefits of changing their governmental system brought to their communities.

The costs for adopting home rule can be prohibitive. Town Manager Mike Foreman said elections can cost upwards of \$15,000 annually.

Most of the trustees were interested in moving forward with the year-long process. It will be discussed further during a June BOT retreat.

Town Clerk Laura Hogan suggested those interested in learning more can sign up for the town's monthly newsletter at townofmonument.org.

Richie suggested residents look at the Colorado Municipal League website, www.cml.org, for more information on home rule in general.

Police promotions

Chase Dukes, Paul Nyman, and Samuel Yanez were sworn in as the newest officers in the Police Department. Chief Sean Hemingway introduced the new officers. Dukes is a Palmer Ridge High School graduate and a native of the area. Nyman worked for 21 years in health-care and was "inspired to change careers to serve this community in a different way," said Hemingway. Yanez served in the military for 25 years and is a certified handgun instructor.

Staff to review revenue excesses and fees

Two ordinances that were requested for approval were sent back to the staff. The first was a request to put an issue onto the November election ballot asking voters to permanently approve the town retaining all revenues including excess.

The Colorado Taxpayers Bill of Rights, or TABOR, limits the amount of excess revenue a municipality may keep and requires it to give excess back to the taxpayers unless the voters allow the town to keep the extra money. Local voters may retain control over revenue by voting against the "statutory formula for calculating permissible revenue."

In the past, Monument voters have allowed the town to keep whatever excess revenues it might receive with elections happening every four years. This ordinance is different because it would allow the excess to be kept permanently.

Several trustees were concerned, saying this request is different from those in the past by including the line, "For the year 2021



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