

Contract with Chilcott Ditch Co. renewed

Shaffer told the board that the district's contract with the Chilcott Ditch Co. (CDC) needed to be renewed for 2022. WWSD owns 55% of the company and other shareholders combined own 45%. WWSD operates and maintains the ditch, which diverts water from Fountain Creek into the Callahan reservoir on Woodmoor Ranch, with other shareholders drawing off their portion of the water for agricultural purposes. CDC pays WWSD \$1,500 monthly for its administrative services and \$31 per hour for the work done to maintain the ditch.

The board voted unanimously to approve the contract as presented.

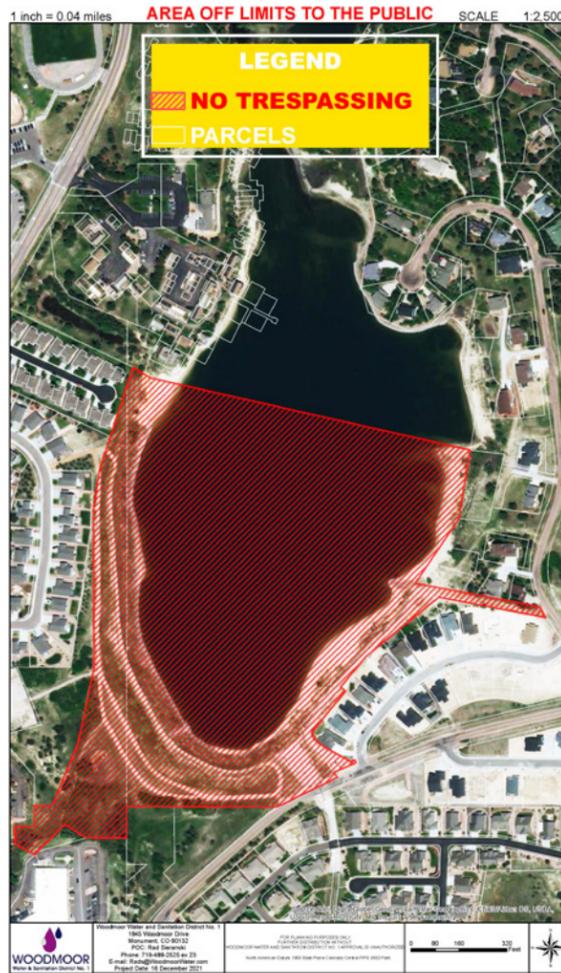
Details about the Chilcott Ditch, which was built in 1865 and incorporated in 1874, can be found here: <https://chilcottditch.com/>

Trail to close until Lake Pump Station complete

During public comments, resident David Hamilton-Smith expressed concern about the number of trees removed due to the construction of a new Lake Pump Station and pipeline. Operations Manager Dan LaFontaine assured Hamilton-Smith that the project included funds to restore the landscape when the project was complete. Shaffer said the restoration effort would be planned in detail when it was known exactly how many trees would be removed to accommodate the new pipeline. He said the contractor had completed erosion control and stormwater management plans, and black fence, hay bales, and wattles would be used to prevent erosion during the construction.

Hamilton-Smith's questions prompted Bush to bring up a topic he was planning to mention to the board later in the meeting. Bush said he had concluded it was necessary to close the trail surrounding the southern half of the lake to pedestrians until the construction of the new Lake Pump Station was complete.

Shaffer explained that the district's policy was to allow residents to walk on the trail, but recently the contractor had expressed safety concerns with people walking through the construction site while work was



Above: This map of Woodmoor Lake shows the portion of the adjacent trail that is temporarily closed to pedestrians. *Map courtesy of Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District.*

in progress. The contractor's equipment had been vandalized, requiring a report to be filed with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. The contractor put up fencing that had been pushed aside. All of this led

Shaffer to conclude access to the trail needed to be suspended temporarily, and he asked Woodmoor Public Safety to enforce the ban on use of the trail.

Shaffer emphasized that if the contractor did not finish the project on schedule, it would delay the re-filling of Woodmoor Lake, leading to an inability to meet peak water demand in the summer of 2022. The contractor was also struggling with the difficulty of obtaining needed materials, he said. Shaffer said he would contact Lewis-Palmer School District 38 to ask them to let students know the trail could not be used to walk to Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

Bush noted that this closure would probably delay construction on the Safe Routes to School trail.

The board agreed to close the trail until the construction was complete.

Highlights of operational reports

- In his Manager's Report, Shaffer said the group working on a water re-use plan that will bring water from Fountain Creek north to WWSD customers applied to the El Paso County Commission for \$45 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding.
- There were six water line breaks in November: three were saddle failures and three were shears.
- A property just east of I-25 and south of County Line Road will be developed into 514 Single Family Equivalent (SFE) residences. The district serves 3,800 SFEs now and expects that to increase about 25% (1,200 SFEs) in the next four to six years.

The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 10 at 1:00 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. Meetings are held at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Dec. 2, 7, 14, and 21

2022 budget approved amid dispute over more funding for Public Health

By Helen Walklett

During December, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the 2022 budget amid disagreement over the additional funding allocated to El Paso County Public Health. The commissioners also made decisions relating to various developments in the Tri-Lakes area.

Commissioner attacks Public Health as 2022 budget adopted

At the regular BOCC meeting on Dec. 7, the commissioners voted to adopt and appropriate the 2022 budget. Making the motion to approve, Commissioner Holly Williams described El Paso County as "an example of a county that is very frugal and a county that runs its government on a low cost per citizen." Commissioner Longinos González Jr. said, "As I second this I'd like to also highlight that I'm very proud of the effort in terms of getting an additional \$14 million more in this budget for roads than in last year's budget."

Just ahead of the final vote, Commissioner Carrie Geitner moved two amendments, both of which failed due to lack of a second. The first would have moved the additional \$150,000 in funding allocated to Public Health to the Department of Public Works for road improvements; the second would have reallocated the funding to the District Attorney's Office. Geitner then went on to outline her displeasure and disapproval of Public Health's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

She said, "So, in my opinion the bureaucracy of Public Health has grown too powerful with a mostly unelected board that does not answer to the people and that some members, including the chair recently [sic] of the board have shown disdain for our community," and continued, "They should not be empowered by the use of additional tax dollars hard earned by our citizens to further their tyrannical aims while the citizens protest their actions. Public Health is not a trusted source of information, and it is unsuccessful in their mission because of their failure to acknowledge real and emerging science, opting instead to promote propaganda aimed at controlling citizens

and repeat the political left narrative of trust the science while again actually censoring the science."

Geitner said the chair of the Public Health board had called those that do not get the COVID vaccine "selfish." She also said the Public Health director specifically lied to the education community, hiding behind state mandates and telling elected officials that she would not implement any local requirements for quarantine.

She continued, "I am not going to stand about while our citizens' civil liberties are under attack, even if it's well-intentioned, even if it's supposedly for their own good. El Paso County Public Health is misguided at best, and I won't speculate at worst. If this Public Health agency is going to be used in this manner, even if it's under the guise of being for our own safety, I will not continue to support its influence. They need to be forced to take a hard look at their actions over the last year." She stated, "We have better ways to spend our local tax money and that includes either on our roads or in the public safety space where we know crime is on the rise, is a true threat to our citizens thanks in most part to the idiotic policies of the Democrats in our state."

Geitner felt there had not been adequate discourse on the matter. Commissioner Cami Bremer disagreed, stating there had been passionate and public discussion of the budget at the three public hearings.

Chair Stan VanderWerf said he empathized with several of Geitner's comments and did not have a lot of trust in the Centers for Disease Control. However, he said it was his firm belief that Public Health had focused on education and adamantly stayed away from mandating masks and vaccines, which he felt was the right choice.

VanderWerf brought the topic up again at the Dec. 14 BOCC meeting, calling Geitner's comments "an unfortunate event that took place last week at this board meeting where a dedicated, hardworking senior official affiliated with El Paso County was verbally and publicly attacked." He said the work of the board was to debate policy, budgets, and do the busi-

ness necessary for citizens and that personal attacks would not be tolerated. He said if it happened again, he would call the speaker out of order and recess the meeting if necessary.

Geitner said she 100% stood by her comments, stating, "I will not be bullied either by the chair of the board or anyone else to do anything other than stand up for the constituents that brought me here. I'm not here to make friends and I'm not here to pretend that things aren't happening that are happening." Cutting her off, VanderWerf recessed the meeting. It resumed several minutes later, moving on to the next agenda item.

The Dec. 7 vote to approve the budget was 5-0. Geitner said she voted yes because she supported the budget, particularly the additional funding for roads.

Winsome development adds three lots

At the Dec. 21 BOCC Land Use meeting, the commissioners approved an amendment to the Winsome development's preliminary plan to allow an increase in the total number of single-family residential lots from 143 to 146. The 768-acre development is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and CC (commercial community) and is located at the northwest corner of the Hodgen Road and Meridian Road intersection.

The application came to the BOCC from the Planning Commission, which voted to recommend it for approval at its Dec. 16 meeting. At that meeting, Joe DesJardin, with developer ProTerra Properties, said the additional three lots would make the project more feasible. Two of the lots are being created from two 10-acre lots being divided into 5-acre lots. The third lot is land previously not thought developable.

At their Dec. 14 meeting, the commissioners approved the final release of a letter of credit for \$401,362 for subdivision improvements at Winsome Filing No. 2 following their completion and satisfactory inspection.

Dancing Wolf development

Also at the Dec. 21 Land Use meeting, the commissioners approved a rezone and a vacation and replat request for the 25-acre Dancing Wolf development at the northeast corner of the intersection of Highway