

approach to distributing the outstanding debt from the purchase of the Woodmoor Ranch based on last month's discussion. WWSD has \$12.5 million of unretired debt for that purchase. Dividing that debt by the number of residences when Woodmoor reaches complete buildout means each resident would be responsible for just under \$2,400 of that debt, Rheem said.

Board President Brian Bush questioned this approach, asking Rheem why the unretired debt should not be divided by the current number of residents rather than by the future number of residents at buildout. Rheem argued using future residents was necessary to abide by the principle of proportional impact of development. Bush also questioned whether the Woodmoor Ranch and its water rights should be considered as outstanding debt or as an asset.

Rheem said the current water tap fee was \$29,788 and proposed three potential water tap fees, each assuming a different approach to funding the EPCRLWA project:

- A water tap fee of \$44,791 if the project is funded with revenue bonds.
- A water tap fee of \$27,195

if the project is funded with general obligation bonds. In this scenario the project cost would be paid via property taxes, not tap fees. This fee would be \$2,553 less than the current fee.

- A water tap fee of \$64,370, if the cost of the project is paid entirely by WWSD. This is the "Go it alone" scenario.

Director Tom Roddam asked Rheem to estimate the maximum tap fee WWSD could charge without being challenged in court. Shaffer said he thought a case could be made for a water tap fee around \$54,000 if the EPCRLWA project were funded with revenue bonds and the costs were shared among the four participating districts.

Directors Dan Beley and Bill Clewe supported setting the water tap fee at \$44,791, arguing that Woodmoor was a desirable community and new residents should be prepared to pay the price to live here.

Bush reiterated his concerns about how the RCN was being calculated, about whether Woodmoor Ranch should be thought of as an asset or an outstanding debt and about inconsistencies in how the EPCRLWA costs were fac-

tored in.

The board asked Rheem to update his analysis in time for its budget workshop on Oct. 24.

Hospital reimbursement option dropped

Shaffer asked the board to authorize removing the Hospital Reimbursement Plan (HRP) from the district's employee benefit package. The option doesn't pay for a lot, he said, and the Colorado Employer Benefit Trust (CEBT), which provides WWSD's health plans, wants to remove it from its offerings. CEBT included the HRP in its portfolio to provide a low-cost, low-benefit choice so that districts could reach 100% participation. CEBT has dropped the requirement for 100% participation, Shaffer said.

The board authorized Shaffer to draft a resolution removing the option if CEBT accepts the possibility WWSD may not reach 100% participation by employees.

"Forever chemical" class action lawsuits

Shaffer told the board that class action lawsuits have been filed against 3M and DuPont regarding their production of PFAS chemicals, sometimes called "forever chemicals" because of their persistence in

the environment. They have been linked to many health issues, including cancer. Shaffer said the lawsuits had been filed on behalf of every public utility in the country.

Shaffer said WWSD had tested for these chemicals in the past and they were not present in WWSD's groundwater in detectable levels. Bush said the district could join the lawsuits if it had spent money on PFAS removal or testing. The lawsuits are asking for \$11 billion in settlements. He asked Smith to file a claim on the WWSD's behalf.

Cybersecurity strategy recommendations

At the previous board meeting, Shaffer was asked to review WWSD's approach to cybersecurity. The district will add a technology called "end-point detection and response," which involves continuous monitoring of the WWSD's IT assets. Shaffer said the staff would be trained on cybersecurity threats.

Highlights of the operational reports

- In his financial report, board Treasurer Roy Martinez said that revenue from water sales was at 67% of the budgeted amount. Given the time of year, he would expect

water sales to be closer to 75%, he said. Martinez attributed the lower sales to the year's rainier weather.

- Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine reported two main breaks, which together led to 2 million gallons of lost water.
- District Engineer Ariel Hacker reported that the county's project to expand Highway 105 between Jackson Creek Parkway and Knollwood Drive was uncovering unknown utility lines.
- Hacker said WWSD had sold 58 water and sewer taps to Classic Homes for residences in the Monument Junction East development and 30 taps to the Cloverleaf development east of Lewis-Palmer High School.

The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 13 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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Monument Sanitation District, Oct. 18

Board addresses budgets, rates, liens

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

Financial matters—budgets, rates, and liens—were the focus when the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board met in October. The board began work on its budget for 2024 and set a date for a public hearing. The board also briefly considered the 2024 budget developed by the Joint Use Committee (JUC) for operation of the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLW-WTF). The board discussed potential changes to rates and fees and scheduled a public hearing to consider them. The board heard a report on delinquent liens and a monthly operational report from District Manager Mark Parker.

MSD 2024 budget presentation

Parker reviewed the MSD budget for 2024 that he presented to the board at the previous meeting. In response to a question from Director Skip Morgan concerning reserve funds, Parker explained the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) requires the district to maintain a certain amount of money in reserve that can't be used for operating expenses. He pointed out that the 2024 budget increased the money budgeted for property and loss insurance and for workers compensation insurance. He explained that engineering fees increased over the previous budget due to \$43,000 in unpaid engineering fees owed to the district. Legal fees also increased because some recording fees and document

review fees were included that would be broken out in future budgets.

The board voted to hold a public hearing on the 2024 budget at its next board meeting, scheduled for 9 a.m. Nov. 15 at the district office at 130 Second St. An announcement of the hearing is included in bills for October.

JUC 2024 draft budget

Parker presented a draft of the 2024 budget for the JUC. MSD partners with Woodmoor Water and Sanitation district and the Town of Palmer Lake in the operation of the TLWWTF: All three approve the JUC's budget.

Parker said sludge removal costs are increasing due to increased fuel costs. Board President Dan Hamilton pointed out the operations costs increased by 30% in the proposed budget.

The board voted unanimously to approve the JUC budget as presented.

Rates and fees remain unchanged

The board discussed online payments, and Parker pointed out that out of 1,757 accounts only 302 pay online with a credit card. The district charges a 2.59% fee for online payments, he said. Hamilton commented that some customers pay by check to avoid the fee. The board discussed a small increase in rates to cover this fee for the customer, but Parker recommended no increase in the 2024 budget. He said staff would continue to study the issue.

Parker said MSD had not

raised rates since 2020, when the monthly rate increased from \$35 to \$40 per month.

The board also discussed tap fees, which are charges paid when a new customer connects to the MSD infrastructure. Parker said the 2023 budget anticipated \$500,000 in tap fee revenue but the actual figure came in closer to \$1.9 million. He said he expected tap fee revenue to be lower in 2024. He explained some tap fees were being paid by homeowners in Wakonda Hills whose septic tanks were failing, requiring them to connect to the MSD collection system. Parker said he expected to see additional tap fee revenue in 2024 from the Willow Springs development, the Monument Ridge development, and from the Rickenbacker Avenue de-

velopment.

The board scheduled a second public hearing to address rates and fees for 9 a.m. Nov. 15 at the district office at 130 Second St. An announcement of the hearing is included in bills for October.

Liens on delinquent accounts

Parker said the district had about 11 delinquent accounts and asked the board to approve Resolution 10182023-1, which would place liens on those accounts. One delinquent account amounted to \$43,000, he said. The board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution.

Manager's report

In his manager's report, Parker said a recent upgrade to the MSD office building's electri-

cal service had been completed at a much lower cost than anticipated. He said he had signed a contract with a roofing company to repair the office building's roof.

Monument Sanitation District meetings are normally held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month in the district conference room at 130 Second St., Monument. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Nov. 15, 2023. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

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Monument Hill Kiwanis Club
presents the
17th Annual North Pole at Tri-Lakes Arts and Crafts Fair

WHEN: Saturday, December 2nd, 9 am - 4 pm
WHERE: Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson Street
In Historic Monument, across from St Peter Catholic Church

The "COOKIE WALK" Returns

Live Holiday Music will be performed throughout the day.
Same weekend as Monument Small Town Christmas.



Admission is FREE with a nonperishable food item, cash, or board game for **Tri-Lakes Cares**



Admission is FREE with a new or used sporting goods donation to **4KidzSports**.



Kiwanis
Monument Hill Club

Making a Difference for Youth and Our Community

For additional show information please contact Bob Nissen:
719-304-8705 or bob@mifigroup.com

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