

said, and tap fees and capital improvement dollars could not be used for operating expenses. She argued grant funds GMS Engineering obtained went into the Water Fund, but GMS Engineering was paid out of the General Fund. She said she did not accept the explanation offered by David Green, of David Green & Associates LLC, the town's auditors. Brodzik also questioned the amount the town proposed to spend on professional services, arguing that more should be done by town staff.

Resident Jim Parco thanked the Town Council and the police and fire chiefs for their hard work. He said he believed sales tax revenues for 2023 would exceed the 2022 amounts by some-

where between 20% and 30%. Parco said he taught economics and was also in the cannabis business and had helped Bass estimate the sales tax revenue from cannabis sales when Bass was mayor. He reminded the board that in 2022 the town had voted to legalize adult use cannabis sales and voted against raising property taxes, even though it was known that the cannabis revenues alone would not solve the town's financial problems. He pointed out that the town had done little to let the public know about cannabis sales, and the sales tax revenue from cannabis sales was delayed from February to April. Parco said he was optimistic about the positive impact cannabis sales would have on the town's finances, especially if Colorado Springs did not approve sales in the next election.

Resident Roger Mosely said he was distressed to hear cuts to the Police Department were being considered. He echoed Brodzik's concerns. In response to Mosely's comments, Town Attorney Matt Krob said the purpose of the hearing was to consider the 2024 budget, not to rehash past decisions.

Havenar closed the public hearing, and the board scheduled a budget workshop to be held on Wednesday, Nov. 29 at 5 p.m. at Palmer Lake Town Hall.

CORE proposes EV charging station

Rob Osborn, CORE Director of Business Development, and Rob Liechty, CORE Member Energy Programs Director, asked the board for permission to place two Level III Fast DC EV chargers in the parking area at Primrose Street and Highway 105 on the west side of the lake. Level III char-

gers can bring an EV to an 80% charge in less than 30 minutes. The chargers would be free for the first month, then would charge residents at rates equal to what they already pay for residential electricity but would charge non-members more. The goal, Osborn said, was to serve members and to support rural development. The chargers would be added to a national network and EV drivers would be able to locate them through their car interface and would be attracted to get off the highway and spend some time in Palmer Lake.

CORE would pay for the installation and would own, operate, and maintain the chargers, they said. They asked the town to commit to a five-year zero payment lease, with the option to renew the lease twice. At the end of the lease, CORE would transfer ownership of the chargers to the town, or the town could ask CORE to remove them. ChargePoint operates a nationwide charger network and would support the proposed chargers.

The board directed Collins to investigate the possibility of a shorter lease and to bring the board a resolution to vote on at a later meeting.

Stormwater enterprise fund rate study debated

At its October meeting, the board asked staff to draft a resolution authorizing a rate study for a proposed stormwater enterprise fund. Collins put Resolution 73-2023 before the board at the Nov. 9 meeting; the resolution authorizes the rate study to be conducted by GMS Engineering at a cost of \$18,500. A stormwater enterprise fund, which would guarantee a revenue stream by charging residents a monthly fee, is required for the town to borrow money to fund stormwater infrastructure that complies with state laws.

Mosely spoke against the resolution, arguing that the discussion has only addressed drainage issues on High Street, that the town does not adequately enforce municipal codes that require property owners to maintain their culverts and ditches, and that it would be a mistake to implement a stormwater enterprise fund until there is a stormwater drainage plan that covers the entire town.

Brodzik proposed using the General Fund to pay for stormwater infrastructure. She argued using the General Fund would eliminate costs required by an enterprise fund and would be fairer to residents. She also proposed the town consider holding a special election to put the question of a mill levy override to fund stormwater infrastructure before the voters. She pointed out that the failure of Proposition HH would mean increased property tax revenue for the town. Brodzik repeated Mosely's suggestion to require property owners to better maintain their culverts and ditches. She suggested that the town hire a contractor to maintain culverts and ditches and bill recalcitrant property owners if necessary.

Collins pointed out that a special election would cost the town between \$12,000 and \$15,000. Havenar said the town did not have the staff to manage Brodzik's proposals and she did not believe a mill levy could pass.

There was consensus on the board to do more to enforce code requiring property owners to maintain the drainage on their properties. Stern suggested waiting to see how much property tax revenues increase due to increased property valuations. Havenar predicted property valuations could begin to decrease in 2026.

The board voted to table the resolution until the end of the first quarter of 2024 and directed staff to add a part-time code enforcer to the town staff in the budget. Dreher voted against tabling; Ball, Ehrhardt, Farr, Havenar, Padgett, and Stern voted in favor of tabling the resolution.

Date set for annexation hearing

At the previous board meeting, the United Congregational Church presented a petition for annexation of its property at 3295 Palmer Divide Rd. to the board. At the Nov. 9 meeting, the board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 74-2023, which schedules a public hearing on the annexation for Thursday, Jan. 25 at 6 p.m., as part

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