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Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area



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Issue #263 — Volume 23 Number 2 — Saturday, February 4, 2023

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See page 28**

Local Events

Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

See pages 28-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- **Winter Fun at Fox Run**, Sat., Feb. 4, 10 am-2 pm
- **Palmer Lake business workshop series**, Thu., Feb. 9
- **D38 Talent Show application due date**, Sat., Feb. 11, auditions Feb. 25.
- **Free D38 chess tournament**, Sat., Feb. 11, 8:15 am.
- **Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Networking**, Tue., Feb. 14, 5-7 pm
- **Palmer Lake Historical Society**, Thu., Feb. 16, 6-8 pm
- **2023 Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassador Program Kick-off**, Tue., Feb. 21, 7-8:30 pm.
- **Black Forest Saddle Club: awards ceremony for top equestrians for 2022 show season**, Sat., Feb. 25, 3 pm
- **McCord's Garden center opens**, Wed., Mar. 1. See ad on page 4.
- **Our Community News mailing day**, Thu., Mar. 2, approx. 9 am-2 pm. Information on page 28.

In this issue

Monument News 1-6
Palmer Lake News 1, 6-11
School District 38 News 1, 6-13
Water & San District News 13-18
Fire District News 18-22
County News 22
NEPCO News 22-23
Weather 23
Columns 23-26
Snapshots 26-27
Notices and Calendar 28-31
OCN Information 28, 31-32

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Print Run: 22,900
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Susan Miner book signing, Jan. 21



Above: Susan Miner of Palmer Lake signed copies of her first novel, *Jewels of Kidron* on Jan. 21 at Covered Treasures Bookstore in Monument. More than two dozen people showed up, including Vivian Cobb seen in photo, to have their copies signed. It took Miner five years to write the novel. She's now working on a sequel. Miner has been active in the community for many years and is currently a member of the Palmer Lake Planning Commission and a former member of the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*

Monument Town Council, Jan. 3 and 17

New Monument board sets aside investigation until new law firm hired

By Chris Jeub

New leadership, police, and lawyers were sworn in, promoted, and hired to set into motion what some call a "new town" that changed in structure as well as personnel in Monument. The election results in November brought two significant changes. First, the Home Rule Charter was voted into law by 70 percent of the vote, transferring the form of government from a state-governed Board of Trustees to self-governed Board Members. Second, three new

members and a new mayor were elected, changing the character of the previous governing body.

However, the interim government followed the election by launching an independent investigation in December that called the validity of the Charter into question, accusing incoming members of illegal electioneering and misappropriation of funds, and presenting evidence of a hostile work environment by town management. January's meetings of the new gov-

ernment were spent setting aside the investigation for a later day while taking care of town business.

Investigation set aside as interim law firm hired

On Jan. 3, at the first meeting of the new government, newly-elected Councilmember Steve King put forth the motion to rescind all meeting notes of the previous month, a motion that passed 4-1 with Councilmember Jim Romanello dissenting. Though several members of the

MONUMENT (Cont. on 2)

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Jan. 12 and 26

Board awards adult-use cannabis licenses, discusses stalled Elephant Rock project

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) met twice in January; the first meeting was preceded by the board meeting in its role of Local Licensing Authority to consider

two requests to operate adult-use cannabis retail stores. Resident Gary Atkins was honored by the board, and Mayor Glant Havenar read a proclamation recognizing Martin Luther King Day. The board passed resolutions appointing

town officers and representatives to boards and commissions. Water tap fees and water usage rates were increased, and the Master Fee Schedule was amended. The town's regulations for signs were updated.

PALMER LAKE (Cont. on 6)

MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)

public expressed a desire to continue December’s investigation, the meeting concluded with three motions presented by newly-elected Mayor Mitch LaKind to “set aside” the investigation, to “fire the lawyer [of the investigation],” and place all intellectual property of the investigation “under lock and key” until legal representation for the town could be hired (the town attorney Kathryn Sellars resigned during the investigation). Romanello expressed he was “not sure if we should lock it up,” but LaKind in-

sisted that “because the attorney-client privilege was violated ... we have to have an attorney review it.” All three motions passed before the meeting adjourned.

At the second meeting on Jan. 17, the board gave Town Manager Mike Foreman direction to hire Lakewood firm Collins Cole Flynn Winn & Ulmer to represent the Town of Monument. Foreman shared that the town had interviewed 17 law firms in the previous two weeks, most of the firms rejecting offers to work for the town. LaKind called on Monument Sanita-



Above: Members of the new Monument Town Council were sworn in at a meeting on Jan. 3. Deputy Town Clerk Tina Erickson gave the oath to, from left, Steve King, Ken Kimple, and Sana Abbott. Mitch LaKind was sworn in as mayor. King was appointed mayor pro tem. Right: Mitch LaKind was sworn in as Monument’s new mayor. Photos by Michael Weinfeld.



tion District Board Member Laura Kronick to testify on behalf of the proposed firm, explaining that they will help direct the town as it has for the district. “I’m all in,” she said.

Foreman highlighted three decades of experience from the team

of lawyers. “Because of the experience they have done in other towns and cities, they have a lot of documents ready for us to adopt.” LaKind explained that this would be a six-month interim that would help determine whether the town would like to “keep them on.” The board gave a unanimous “thumbs up” to hire the firm the next day, Jan. 18.

Background: To review details of the now-rescinded meetings, refer to the Jan. 7 OCN article “Special investigator claims Home Rule Charter void in report alleging illegal electioneering by Monument staff” at <https://ocn.me/v23n1.htm#mbot>. The investigation report is available through this shortened link: shorturl.at/imv13, and its Google folder of documentation may be accessed at shorturl.at/nouwZ. The report’s conclusion recommended several actions. Specifically:

- Publicly censuring King, Sellars, Abbott, LaKind, and Foreman for allegedly ob-

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structing an official investigation, Foreman for allegedly failing to completely address misogyny and a hostile work environment, and LaKind for an alleged misogynist comment to a councilwoman while at the dais. Other censuring was recommended for Town IT Manager Drew Anderson and former Trustee Redmond Ramos (who resigned following his election to office, reason not given).

- Holding in Civil Contempt of Town Council—Foreman for allegedly refusing direction from the board, King and Abbott for obstruction, Ramos for allegedly intimidating witnesses and ridiculing the investigation, and LaKind for alleged obstruction and the mentioned misogynist comment.
- Terminating the employment of Foreman and Sellars.
- Filing an ethics com-



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plaint with the Colorado Supreme Court Attorney Regulation Counsel against Sellars for alleged obstruction, conflicts of interest, malpractice, errors, or omission resulting in deception of the public, misappropriation of funds, misrepresenting the Charter to the

public, and electioneering. The report also asked to create processes for anonymous complaints from staff and the public, check-writing accountability, and Robert's Rules of Order during public meetings. Its final recommendation asked for adoption of the State Standard for Gerrymandering to be applied to the Home Rule Charter, declaring the Charter unconstitutional and void.

Other matters

With the looming investigation set aside, the new board took care of town business. Members and an interim police chief were sworn in, officers were promoted, and all resolutions and ordinances were passed.

- Ken Kimple, Abbott, and King were sworn in as new councilmembers.
- LaKind was sworn in as new mayor.
- King was voted as new mayor pro tem.
- Police officer Tim Johnson was sworn in as interim police chief.
- Two police officers were promoted to ser-



Above: Monument police Commander Tim Johnson was sworn in as the town's interim police chief at the Jan. 3 meeting of the Town Council. Town Manager Mike Foreman gave Johnson the oath. Johnson at least temporarily replaces Police Chief Sean Hemingway, who retired. Foreman says they're interviewing candidates in addition to Johnson for the position. Photo by Michael Weinfeld.

geant (Sam Yanez and Colin Rosten) and one to lieutenant (Mark Owens).

Resolution No. 04-2023: A Resolution Declaring a Vacancy on Town Council and Outlining an Appointment Process passed unanimously. There are currently two vacancies on the Town Council, one to replace Mayor LaKind's position and the other to replace the resignation of Redmond Ramos (a reason for his resignation was not given). The board made a general call for volunteers to make themselves known if they would like to serve on the Town Council.

Resolution No. 02-2023: A Resolution Appointing Members to the Planning Commission passed unanimously. King expressed his admiration to the Planning Commission for being diligent in holding developers accountable. "It used to be a rubber stamp," he claimed, "but it isn't any longer." The board asked again for volunteers to make themselves known if they would like to serve on the Planning Commission.

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Resolution No. 05-2023: A Resolution to Approve a Single Water Service Connection Outside of Our Current Water Service Boundary passed unanimously. Director of Public Works Thomas Tharnish proposed allowing Palmer Lake Mobile Home Ranch to tap into Monument's water source. The park, consisting of 26 mobile homes, has radium issues with its current well, and the Town of Palmer Lake does not have the capability to help with water mains. Since the park is only 1,000 feet from Monument's boundary, they asked to pay a tap fee and take the service from Monument. Kimple asked, "If the line breaks, who's on the hook?" and "What happens if they [the tenants] want to wash their cars in the summer?" Tharnish responded that the town would be responsible for everything up to the hookup, and "I suppose [car washing] could happen." Abbott asked, "Will there be more than 26 homes in the future?" Tharnish responded that the only expansion to the park will "probably be for storage." After the unanimous vote to share Monument's water with the mobile home park, Kimple added, "This is helping out our neighbor."

KFC approved

Ordinance No. 01-2023: An Ordinance Approving a Final Planned Unit Development for Lot 3 Monument Market Place North passed unanimously. Monument's new Director of Planning Shelia Booth gave her first presentation explaining the staff's recommendation to approve the development of Lot 3 to include a new KFC. The applicant and the franchisee were present to explain the design details of the new restaurant. Councilmembers asked about sign height, traffic, and design standards. Public comment from Matthew Brunk saw KFC's working with the town as a "beautiful thing," but Patty Forester expressed displeasure with more fast food coming to town, asking "when is enough enough?" Councilmember King agreed "fast food is personally not my thing" but explained that it was not in his purview to mitigate land use. "We can't change this now," he said. "What we can do is help make the development more of a small-town feel."

Public comments and council responses
Brandy Turner congratulated the new councilmembers for "earning the trust of our community" but also warned "your responsibility is just starting." She added, "I did want to ask you to continue the investigation, hire a fully independent investigator to investigate the same questions that the prior board had." Brunk called on Abbott and King to recuse themselves in order for the rest of the investigation to be "above reproach." Another member of the public asked for

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the investigation to continue in a timely way and to be cleared up. "It put a cloud over the whole [town]," he said.

Councilmember Romanello agreed, "I would like to echo the community interest into continuing the investigation, as Mayor LaKind committed to it [in December]." Abbott said, "I fully support an investigation." King, however, expressed he had a problem with the previous investigator "spending so much time investigating the Home Rule Charter" and that perhaps the money spent should be reimbursed to the town. Kimple asked if the lawyer was still billing the town, and Foreman said he has approved as much as he was able, and if there were more it would need to come from the board.

Mayor LaKind offered to gift town staff with two weeks paid vacation as amends for "low morale" during the investigation. Foreman expressed his appreciation and shared that he "already talked with financing and HR to come up with a plan." Details of implementing the offer were discussed. Foreman shared that the town staff may go to a four-week summer and give Fridays off or give two weeks of pay at the end of the year to those who don't take the days off. Abbott asked how this could be applied to already-accrued vacation, and LaKind explained his intent: "The two weeks would be above-and-beyond whatever they accrued for the year, and this would only be for employees currently employed today." The board gave direction for Foreman to come up with a plan with options for two weeks of paid vacation.

King added general comments about his feelings about recent conservation easements. After explaining actions surrounding Forest Lakes, Mount Herman, and other places in the Tri-Lakes area, King commented, "It's nice to see something from time to time that preserves some land. We seem overwhelmed at times with all the development going on, but once in a while

there is a silver lining."

Correction

The Jan. 7 article in OCN ("Special investigator claims Home Rule Charter void in report alleging illegal electioneering by Monument staff") misstated Laura Kronick as the person who wrote the check curing the misappropriation of funds stated in the investigator's report. The writer of the check was Brandy Turner. OCN regrets the error.

The Monument Town Council usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next two regular meetings are scheduled for Monday, Feb. 6 and Tuesday, Feb. 21 (the Monday before is Presidents' Day). Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minutesondemand.com> and click on Town Council.

Chris Jeub can be reached at chrisjeub@ocn.me.

New Church!

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PALMER LAKE (Cont. from 1)

The board voted to terminate the agreement with Monument Fire District to provide ambulance service.



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Christina Cotton

At its Jan. 26 meeting, the board discussed possible next steps on the stalled Elephant Rock property development, approved a driveway agreement for one of the adult-use cannabis shops, and authorized contracting services for a water fund analysis.

Adult-use cannabis licenses approved
Melissa Woodward of Alpine Essential LLC, and Dino Salvatori, owner of Palmer Lake Wellness, requested their businesses receive licenses from the town to add retail sales of adult-use cannabis to their current business operations. The town must grant licenses permitting retail sales before Woodward and Salvatori can apply for corresponding licenses from the state.

In response to Woodward's license application, Havenar raised the issue of potential impact on traffic, particularly the ability of nearby homeowners to reach Highway 105 quickly. Several options to manage traffic flow were discussed: extending Commercial Lane to connect Circle Road and Meadow Lane, adding a right turn lane at the intersection of Circle Road and Highway 105, and commissioning a traffic study to gather more data. Woodward said she would provide personnel to direct traffic on her property at 850 Commercial Lane when her business



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begins retail sales.

During public comments, residents Atkins and Larry Ennenga said they were concerned that the nearby homes had a single point of access to Highway 105. Stan Berkenkotter, the owner of 850 Commercial Lane, said he did not expect traffic to be significantly impacted by retail sales being added to Woodward's business, and he mentioned the possibility he would develop an additional lot he owns on Commercial Lane. Resident Dee Banta said the town should plan for additional traffic, and resident Matt Stephen suggested on-street parking be prohibited on nearby streets. Woodward said her business was adding parking spaces to minimize on-street parking and would consider adding a stop sign and right-turn-only signage for customers exiting her business.

At the Jan. 26 meeting, the board unanimously approved a driveway agreement with the property owner, Berkenkotter Holdings LLC, to allow access to Alpine Essential on 850 Commercial Lane from a platted, undeveloped right of way in the town.

Salvatori's license application gave rise to a discussion about odor from his cannabis grow. Salvatori told the board that he has discontinued growing cannabis but still received complaints about odor. Stephen pointed out that no odor should be detectable at the property boundary.

The board voted to approve both retail licenses with the stipulations that a traffic study would be done in six months and traffic issues would be addressed sooner if needed.

Elephant Rock property next steps

At the Jan. 26 meeting, Havenar noted that the Parks Commission had been exploring options on connecting Creekside Trail and the Elephant Rock property but were not yet ready to bring a recommendation to the board.

Kent Hudson, the new president of the Palmer Lake Economic Development Group (PLEDG), raised concerns that this plan might derail a potential multi-million-dollar development opportunity on the property. He said he would love to see representatives from the board, the parks and planning commissions, and the Carter Payne group come to the table and negotiate.

Town Clerk Dawn Collins asked the board if it was considering hearing the parks proposal at a February meeting, would it like to extend the invitation to the other interested parties? Havenar said the Willanses had been invited and accepted to come to the February meeting, but the Carter Payne group said they were out if they couldn't purchase the land instead of a long-term lease as had been discussed.

Trustee Kevin Dreher said the discussion was a little premature and the board needed to decide exactly what they were willing to do with the property and that, in fairness to Carter Payne, the board had changed midstream. Trustee Shana Ball said the board's mistake was not to present the property properly and that it went from "bring your ideas" to an unofficial agreement very quickly, skipping some steps. Dreher said it was important to know what the board might do with the parks and whether it wanted to set aside land for a public safety building, then they could discuss lease vs. sale. Collins said it was up to the board whether it wanted to hear concepts first or decide on the parameters first, reminding it that the board has authority over town property.

In public comments, residents said they had been fans of the Carter Payne concept and were sad to find out that negotiations had broken down. They felt that the Parks Commission meeting had pulled the rug out from Carter Payne and hoped the town could find a dignified way to move forward, suggesting a public workshop might be



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Above: At the Jan. 12 Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Mayor Glant Havenar recognized resident Gary Atkins for his efforts to ensure that Palmer Lake Town Hall not sustain damage during December’s freezing weather when its furnace broke down. *Photo by James Howald. Caption by Jackie Burhans.*

good. Lindsay and Richard Willans spoke, agreeing on the points made by the board and others, expressing their continued interest in renovating the pool area to create a spa. Richard Willans said everybody assumed the land would be up for sale eventually. Lindsay Willans said the original idea was to preserve 51% of the land for the town, connect to the Creekside Trail and bring in business investors who would only be interested if they could lease

to own. Havenar summarized that the board wanted to hear from the Parks Commission on Feb. 26 and from the Willanses at the March 9 meeting. In the meantime, if Carter Payne wanted to re-open negotiations, they could reach out to her or Collins and could include a representative from PLEDG. Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Stern asked how to communicate any directions that come out of a potential executive session,



Above (L to R): At the Jan. 12 Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Police Chief Jason Vanderpool administers the oath of office to new officer Stafon Stevens. *Photo by James Howald. Caption by Jackie Burhans.*

and Collins said the board could have her convey the parameters to interested parties. Attorney Scott Krob reminded the board that no decisions could be made in executive session, but the board could provide direction to staff on what parameters they wanted to set. Any binding decision would be in an open meeting.

Atkins honored

Havenar presented a certificate to Atkins honoring him for his efforts to protect the newly refurbished Town Hall when the furnace failed during the Christmas holiday. Atkins came to the Town Hall during a storm to ensure that any emergencies would be addressed as quickly as possible.

Martin Luther King Day recognized

Havenar read a proclamation recognizing King’s work to further peace, freedom, equality, and justice for all in America and designating Jan. 16 as a holiday in his honor.

Appointments made; resignation submitted

The board passed seven resolutions appointing town officers and representatives to boards and commissions:

- Resolution 2-2023, which names John Cic-

colella as municipal judge, Collins as town administrator, clerk and treasurer, and Krob Law Office as the town attorney.

- Resolution 3-2023, which appoints Charlie Ihlenfeld, Bill Fisher, Mark Bruce, and Amy Hutson to the Planning Commission.
- Resolution 4-2023, which appoints Mike Pietsch and Phyllis Head to the Parks Commission.
- Resolution 5-2023, which appoints Havenar to the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments.
- Resolution 6-2023, which appoints Nikki McDonald to the Pikes Peak Areas Council of Governments Citizens Advisory Committee.
- Resolution 7-2023, which appoints Kurt Ehrhardt, Charlie Ihlenfeld, Bob Radosovich, and Trustee Dreher to the Board of Adjustments.
- Resolution 8-2023, which appoints Trustee Stern to the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department.

At the Jan. 26 meeting, the board unanimously designated Jessica Farr as the

board representative to Awake Palmer Lake as a non-voting ex-officio member to ensure transparency and facilitate communication.

In addition to these appointments, Palmer Lake Police Chief Jason Vanderpool administered the oath of office to new officer Stafon Stevens.

Trustee Karen Stuth resigned from the board before the Local Licensing Authority meeting on Jan. 12.

Water tap fees and usage rates increased

The board voted to increase water tap fees and water usage rates by 7%. Collins explained that this increase was needed to make up for increases that had not been done previously as scheduled in 2019, and the new rates were added to the town’s Master Fee Schedule.

Resident Roger Mosely commented that, in his opinion, the rate increases were not adequate and usage rates should be increased to \$30 per month

The board voted in favor of Resolution 13-2023, which increases the two rates by 7% in 2023 and by 3% in following years. Trustees Ball, Dreher, and Stern, along with Mayor Havenar, voted in favor and Trustees Farr and Samantha Padgett voted no.

The board also directed Collins to proceed with a more comprehensive analysis of the water fund, passing resolution 17-2023 on Jan. 26 to authorize an amount not to exceed \$6,000 for Christopher Brandewie to perform the professional services.

The amended Master Fee Schedule was also approved, with Ball, Dreher, Havenar, Padgett, and Stern voting in favor and Farr voting no.

Maximum sign size established

The board voted in favor of Ordinance 1-2023, which amends the town’s code governing signs to specify a maximum size of 40 square feet and give businesses 60 days to comply with the new requirements.

Ambulance agreement terminated

Interim Fire Chief John Vincent told the board that the town’s agreement to get ambulance service from Monument Fire District (MFD) required 90 days’ notice to terminate. Vincent said the agreement allowed MFD to bill the town for each ambulance trip in addition to billing the recipient of the service. Vincent said the principle of mutual

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aid was enough to get the same level of service but at a lower cost. The board voted unanimously to terminate the agreement. See

MFD article on page 21.

The next board meetings are scheduled for Feb. 9 and 23. See the town's website

at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second

and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.
James Howald can be reached at

jameshowald@ocn.me.
Jackie Burhans can be reached at
jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, Jan. 10

Committee restructure, Kilmer presentation, strategic plan update

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (PCAC) discussed a restructure of the district's committees, an update to the strategic plan, and initiatives related to financial transparency.

Committee restructure

Board of Education liaison Tiffiney Upchurch and Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine reported on the board's discussions regarding the hierarchical structure of district committees.

At its September meeting, PCAC voted to include the Wellness Team and the Financial Advisory Committee subcommittees of PCAC in addition to the Special Education Advisory Committee and the Gifted Talented Leadership Team.

It was determined at the December board meeting that, since these committees as well as building advisory committees are required under state or federal law, they should be independent and hold their own meetings open to the public.

If this change is approved by the board at its January meeting, it will be necessary to change the PCAC's bylaws.

A draft application form for PCAC membership was proposed for use in the upcoming school year to ensure that all schools are represented by parents and staff in addition to community participation. Technically the board must appoint these members, and this form would make it possible to determine that all are represented.

Committee members were concerned that, by removing the former subcommittees from PCAC, information from them to PCAC would be less forthcoming.

Whetstine responded that the committees are still welcome to report to the group.

When a member expressed concern that a formal application would discourage participation, Upchurch responded that the application was designed to meet state statutes.

The discussion was tabled until February pending board action.

Financial transparency update

In keeping with priority 4 of the district's strategic plan supporting responsible fiscal practices, Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway asked for questions regarding recent financial actions.

When asked about the one-time compensation bonus, he said that it was a small step to resolving the gap in compensation between D38 and neighboring districts. The Staff Collaboration Committee, consisting of representatives from schools and administration, approved the bonus.

There was discussion about the recent staff/parent/community survey. Committee members commented that they did not understand some aspects of the survey and hesitated to respond.

Whetstine said that the purpose of the survey was to determine which actions would resonate with the community in the face of the recent mill levy override defeat. The survey indicated significant support for a four-day school week, and the board tasked the administration to investigate the ramifications of implementing it.

District staff approved the use of the survey because it indicated that the district supported them and was willing to take further action to correct the gap in compensation.

Ridgway presented a midyear financial summary. Details can be found on the district website, lewispalmer.org, under

Family Resources, District Accountability Advisory Committee, meeting content.

Kilmer School presentation

Brian Pohl, the new principal of Ray Kilmer Elementary, offered a slide presentation about the school.

He said the school stresses academic growth and achievement, human growth, and character development. The school uses the responsive classroom model to ensure that students develop healthy relationships among themselves and staff by communicating daily. The school's vision is to educate the whole child.

One innovative practice at Kilmer is to devote part of each Friday to Innovation Day. In alternate weeks, students rotate to the Innovation Station where they learn computational thinking and Coyote Time which focuses on computational thinking, engineering design, and robotics.

In the Learning Zone program, students spend 30

minutes each day concentrating on a specific subject. For grades K to 3 this is usually reading. For higher grades this could be math or writing. The concentrated focus could be in or out of the classroom.

To view the slide presentation, please see the website as noted above.

The Parent and Community Advisory Community meets six times per year. Locations vary. The next meeting is from 6 to 8 p.m. on Feb. 7 at Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, 1315 Lake Woodmoor Dr. in Monument. For further information, please contact tmckee@lewispalmer.org.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at
harriethalbig@ocn.me.

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To view a territory map with districts, visit www.mvea.coop/territory-map.

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- To be nominated by the nominating committee, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. If seeking election by nomination through the nominating committee, a candidate questionnaire must be received by MVEA to be submitted to the committee by 5:30 p.m., Thursday, March 16, 2023.
- To be nominated by petition, you must have the petition signed by 15 MVEA members. Petitions and procedures will be made available by contacting the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. The petition, along with a completed candidate questionnaire, must be received by MVEA by 5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 6, 2023.

A candidate questionnaire must be completed for either nomination by the committee or nomination by petition. If you have questions, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line.

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Monument Academy School Board, Jan. 3, 12, and 27

Board hires financial consultant



Above: The Monument Academy board heard from its interim chief operating officer (COO), Kim McClelland, at its Jan. 12 meeting about her efforts to get to know the staff, do some fact-finding, and begin planning to update MA's strategic plan and develop operational and academic dashboards. Pictured from left to right are board

members Joe Buczkowski and Danny O'Brien, Board president Ryan Graham, board members Lindsay Clinton and Craig Carle, McClelland, High School Principal David Kennington, Middle School Principal Colin Vinchattle and Elementary School Principal Kurt Walker. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

By Jackie Burhans

At a Jan. 3 special meeting, the Monument Academy (MA) board hired a financial consultant. At its regular meeting on Jan. 12, the board heard from its interim chief operating officer (COO) on its strategic plan and announced the process for upcoming board elections. Finally, at a special meeting on Jan. 27, the board heard about changes to its budgeting format and approved an amended budget for the 2022-23 school fiscal year.

Financial consultant hired

At a special meeting on Jan. 3, the board went into executive session for two hours to discuss “negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding potential contracted finance and bookkeeping services.”

The board returned to open session, noting that its former Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Marc Brocklehurst had resigned effective Jan. 6 and announcing that it had found a solution. The board voted unanimously to authorize board President Ryan Graham to proceed with the execution of a contract with Glenn Gustafson as a financial consultant supporting the ad-

ministration and governing board. Gustafson has extensive experience working with school districts in financial roles, including as CFO for D11 schools and School Finance Program manager at the Colorado Department of Education.

The board also approved a financial manager job description.

At the Jan. 12 meeting, Graham clarified that the financial consultant role was not a permanent posting and that the board had not hired a new CFO but had posted an open position.

Board election

Vice President Lindsay Clinton reported on the upcoming MA board election. Graham, who is term-limited, and board Director Michael Geers, who was appointed to fill a vacancy, will see their terms end on June 30. Clinton explained that the board sets policy and has two employees: the COO and CFO. MA is accepting applications through March 31 from qualified applicants who are parents or guardians of a current student and over 25 years of age.

Applicants will give a five-minute statement of interest at the April



Above: At the Jan. 12 Monument Academy (MA) meeting, board Director Craig Carle, left, presents Monument Police Officer Trevon Perry, right, who serves as MA's school resource officer (SRO), with a certificate of appreciation. Carle spoke about Perry's contributions to the school as its SRO. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

board meeting and participate in a community question-and-answer session. The five-day election will be held at the end of April.

In May, the election results will be announced at the board meeting, and newly elected directors will be sworn in at the June meeting to begin their three-year term starting July 1.

Clinton raised the idea of changing MA's bylaws to expand board qualifications so that parents of high school juniors or seniors could continue their term after their student graduated. Graham noted that bylaw changes required a first reading and then would come back to a later meeting for a vote. Board Director Joe Buczkowski recommended the board take its time and do some additional research. Clinton agreed to table the discussion and bring it back later.

Strategic plan update gets focus

At the Jan. 12 meeting, Kim McClelland, interim COO, reported that she had been getting to know the staff, doing some fact-finding, and planning to develop operational and academic school dashboards, which visually display metrics on school performance. She noted that MA's strategic plan had not been updated in some time. The strategic plan would improve prioritization going forward by identifying short- and long-term goals and would guide what goes onto the

board agendas and the dashboards. The dashboard, she said, would be available to the community as well as the school district.

McClelland laid out the next steps and the process to work with stakeholders to develop the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, which will allow MA to hold the COO, administration, and students accountable. The plan should evolve over time, she said, and needs to be a living document that includes continuous dashboarding to show key performance indicators on how goals are being met. She hopes to have a draft by August.

Clinton and Board Director Craig Carle were appointed to the strategic plan committee.

Budget updates

The MA board met via Zoom on Jan. 27 to approve its amended budget for 2022-2023. Gustafson reported that former CFO Brocklehurst had prepared a mid-year budget that only included the general fund and not the preschool fund, the facility corporation funds, or the pupil activity fund. Gustafson said he talked to the D38 Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway, who said he was not concerned so long as MA did not exceed its original budget appropriation.

Gustafson noted that Brocklehurst's budgets focused on looking at the two campuses separately due to bond requirements. Gustafson has been learning about the bonds



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and found out on Wednesday that annual reports were due on Jan. 26 for which he was able to scramble and get done. He also noted that MA had received a notice of deficiency because the audit has not been completed. He contacted the auditors, who said they are getting close and are required to complete it no later than March 1.

Gustafson said he would be preparing a budget using the Colorado Department of Education template he had created that would show all five funds consolidated and would also show the two campuses separately. Next year, MA will have a more robust budget that the board, parents, and community will like, and that will let the board and executive director make strategic decisions, he said.

The board unanimously approved the amended budget for the 2022-2023 school fiscal year.

Highlights

- Board meeting highlights include:
- Carle spotlighted School Resource Officer (SRO) Trevon Perry. Perry, who is also a police officer for Monument Police Department, has done a fantastic job, Carle said, building good relationships with kids and responding to a threat in December.
 - Graham reported for the Highway 105 Committee that MA had engaged Wilson & Co. as its construction manager for the West Campus recirculation project. Phase 1 of the project is expected to begin in mid-May and will construct a road behind the school to allow cars to enter and exit on Knollwood Drive and circulate around the school for carline. MA hopes to complete Phase 1 by October 2023; its current agreement with the church next door allows it to use the church's exit until Dec. 31. Phase 2 will include a roundabout at Knollwood as part of the Highway 105 expansion by El Paso County.
 - Carle reported that the Lynx Fund Annual Campaign had raised 13% of its \$500,000 goal with 153 donations, 12 of which were Lynx Legacy donations of \$1,996.
 - The board approved a resolution authorizing MA to participate in the Colorado Local Government Liquid Asset Trust (ColoTrust) to pool funds for investment, increasing their return on reserve funds while maintaining liquidity and minimizing risk. Board Director Michael Geers voted no.
 - A new preschool contract and fee structure were unanimously approved by the board for the 2023-2024 fiscal school year.
 - The board approved a facility use agreement for its East Campus to be used as a Red Cross shelter in case of a disaster.
 - Geers read a letter from the parent survey conducted by the West Campus School Accountability and Advisory Committee (SAAC). It recommended that MA hire a communica-

tions manager and educate the community on the Colorado Measures of Academic Standards (CMAS) testing.

- The board approved the athletic sportswear discussed in the Dec. 6 meeting for inclusion into the middle school uniform

policy and instructed the governance committee to update the policy. The high school dress code already allows it.

The MA School Board meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board

meeting will be on Thursday, Feb. 9, at 6 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Jan. 23

Board discusses budgeting strategy for facilities, passes amended budget

By Harriet Halbig

In response to conversations at the December board meeting and Jan. 10 work session, the board was presented with detailed information on the condition of facilities, a strategy for funding improvements, a letter to stakeholders, and an amended budget for the 2022-23 school year.

Facilities capital planning

At its December meeting, the board declined to purchase additional school buses due to uncertainty in the economy. Board President Chris Taylor requested that Execu-

tive Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter determine the condition of the district's facilities, including the cost of regular replacement of such items as turf on playing fields. In this way funding could be prioritized.

At the Jan. 23 meeting, Coulter and Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway reported on the results of conversations with principals and building managers at all district schools regarding the condition of their facilities. This investigation did not include Monument Acad-

emy because theirs is a separate budget. Feedback from the two high schools had not yet been received.

Improvements include such major items as roofing and paving and such minor projects as painting and replacement of carpets.

Coulter recommended spending \$3 million per year to have all facilities in good condition by the 2026-27 school year.

Coulter said that during the pandemic it became impossible to get guaranteed estimates from contractors due to fluctuating oil cost



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Above: At the Lewis-Palmer D38 Board meeting, students selected to perform in upcoming All State choir, orchestra, and band performances were honored. While not all students were able to attend the meeting, which began with a sax performance of the Star Spangled Banner by Raleigh Eversole, the following students were recognized: All State Choir from PRHS (Feb 11 in Denver): Raleigh Eversole, Bass 2 (also selected last year), Carmen Reyes, Alto 2 (also selected last year), Sheppard Pennison, Tenor 1; All State Choir from LPHS: Katelyn Marsh, Soprano 1; Emily Allen, Alto 2; All State Jazz Band from PRHS (Jan 26-28 at the Broadmoor Hotel): Raleigh Eversole, tenor saxophone; Nate Sapp, piano and trombone (chose piano); Cole Wickert, alto saxophone; All State Jazz Band from

LPHS: Niko Skorick, trumpet; All State Orchestra from PRHS (Feb 2-4 at CSU Ft Collins): Ruby Bales, trombone; Emma Bloomfield, clarinet; Casey Gooding, percussion; Ceci Eversole, clarinet; Raleigh Eversole, bassoon; All State Orchestra from LPHS: Bree Atnip, oboe; Heather Hawkins, percussion; Will Simpfordorter, oboe; All State Band from PRHS (March 23-25 at UNC in Greeley): Ruby Bales, trombone; Emma Bloomfield, clarinet; Caleb Dall, tuba; Ceci Eversole, clarinet; Raleigh Eversole, bassoon; Grace Lusk, baritone saxophone; Caleb Ray, tenor saxophone; Nate Sapp, euphonium; Cole Wickert, alto saxophone; Chelsea Young, clarinet; All State Band from LPHS: Bree Atnip, oboe; Will Simpfordorter, oboe; Riley Smith, bass trombone; Robert Weeks, trombone. *Photo by Jackie Burhans*

and supply chain issues. At present, estimates are often only guaranteed for a week or a month or so.

Consequently, Coulter and Ridgway said that they would like to prepare purchase orders for many of the needs as soon as possible and to have assurance from the board that the purchase orders would be funded after July 1. Coulter said that \$2.3 million would be required this year to begin work. They assured the board that bids would be sought from contractors known to the district.

Board Vice President Theresa Phillips asked about the 10% contingency included in the estimate.

Coulter responded that the contingency funds could be used in cases of emergency repairs and for such purposes as upgrading playgrounds and transitioning to touch-free bathrooms district-wide.

Taylor said that because the list was incomplete, the board need not vote to approve the expenditures at this time. He also referred to a board policy which stipulates that expenditures should be prioritized

toward the greatest educational result. He asked that were the district to budget such a large amount to facilities, would we be sacrificing curriculum or salaries? He requested that Superintendent KC Somers look at the big picture.

Coulter said this process is part of the regular budgeting procedure and intended to make the board aware of needs so it would not be surprised later. Ridgway concurred and added that it is important to know if the board is hesitant.

When asked if this list included school buses, Coulter said it did not because buses would be funded from the transportation fund.

Strategic plan update

Somers reported that work is underway to update the district's strategic plan to include a provision for operations and facility planning. The strategic plan is a work in progress and previously included provisions for a safe and healthy learning environment, world class education, caring for our people, fiscal responsibility, and communication and relationships with the



Above: In honor of National School Board Recognition Month, Superintendent K.C. Somers recognized the D38 Board members for their work on behalf of Lewis-Palmer School District 38. From left to right are board members Theresa Phillips and Tiffany Upchurch, board President Chris Taylor, and Superintendent KC Somers. Board members Matt Clawson and Ron Schwarz attended the meeting by phone. Somers noted that school board members exemplify local citizen control and decision-making in education, saying they volunteer hundreds of hours to assure that our schools are providing the best education possible for the children of our community. School Board Recognition Month was also celebrated by a proclamation by Governor Jared Polis. *Photo by Jackie Burhans*

community.

Somers said that his focus this evening was on valuing our people in response to the defeat of the mill levy override in November and concerns about compensation.

Somers said that his approach was based on compensation (regular and supplemental and benefits), professional development to include recognizing certification, calendar concerns regarding how time is allocated, program design and efficiencies, and the district's culture regarding values and beliefs.

Taylor commented that he recalled that 10% of staff assessments were based on performance. He asked if that were still the case.

Somers responded that he has heard from staff that they do not support this. He has not discussed it with the Staff Collaboration Committee. He is not aware of a Colorado district which includes performance in its assessment process.

When asked if this was included in surveys, Somers replied that it was not.

Taylor said that some community individuals seem to be in favor of it.

Somers reported on results of an investigation into transitioning to a four-day school and work week, as requested by the board at its December meeting. He said that emphasis is on recruiting and retaining quality staff, and the Staff Collaboration Committee would meet in a few days and could dis-

cuss the matter.

Based on conversations with some staff, Somers said that a four-day schedule was not favored, although he couldn't say whether staff would choose to work elsewhere if it were implemented.

Staff seems to be more concerned with being competitive with compensation, and compensation would not change with a four-day week.

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine commented that another district in the region tried using a four-day week and there was a lot of turnover as a result. She said there are concerns among parents regarding child care and the impact on learning. Although there is not an indication of impact on achievement, there appears to be an impact on growth, she said. There is a concern that families may opt to send their children to school in another district should a four-day week be implemented.

The only change in the calendar for the 2023-24 school year is to eliminate some of the delayed starts and replace them with full days of professional development. If the four-day work week were approved, it would not go into effect until 2023-25.

Upchurch recommended that one or more members of the board should attend the Staff Collaboration Committee meetings.

Somers said that the district's proposed pay schedule will be pre-



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sented at the March board meeting. Taylor requested that there also should be a pay schedule as it would be had the MLO passed. He said the community wants to know how the district would spend the \$4 million if it were approved. This could be a way to demonstrate the need for additional funding.

Board letter to stakeholders
The Board of Education issued a letter to stakeholders in mid-January which was also published in the *Tribune* newspaper.

In it, the board said that there is still a need for sustainable funding for compensation. While the board continues to explore ways to cut costs without sacrificing educational excellence, the primary source of sustainable funding would be a mill levy override. Other local districts have successfully passed overrides over that past few years. The last successful one in D38 was in 1999.

Although per pupil revenue from the state is forecast to increase in the next few years, all districts would benefit equally, and therefore the gap between D38 compen-

sation and neighboring districts would remain.

The board encouraged citizens to attend board meetings and volunteer to help educate the community.

Phillips said there have been emails from community members offering to help. Some also explained why they voted against the measure.

Upchurch commented that the letter implied that there would definitely be another ballot issue this year when that is not yet the case.

Phillips suggested scheduling some Elevate and Engage sessions with the public to improve participation.

The board approved an amended budget for the 2022-23 school year which included mention of the one-time compensation action in early January.

Policy revisions

The board approved two policy revisions. The first reversed the requirement that parents pay the tuition for concurrent enrollment classes if the student fails the class.

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Jan. 9

Board sets rules for new year

By James Howald

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board voted on two resolutions in its first meeting of 2023 that define the rules and procedures for the rest of the year. During public comments, the board heard from a resident interested in running for a seat on the board. In his Manager's Report, District Manager Jessie Shaffer gave the board an update on the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA). The board also heard the timeline to refill Woodmoor Lake and operational reports.

Resolutions address procedures and election

The board voted unanimously to pass Resolution 23-01, which addresses issues required of special districts by the state of Colorado such as providing a map of the district's boundaries and documentation of the district's outstanding debts. Attorney Erin Smith told the board that the resolution also specifies that the date, time, and location of board meetings will be posted on the district's web page and at the district's office, sets forth the district's officers and establishes the upcoming election as a polling place election.

The district's web page is at <https://woodmoorwater.com> and the district's office is located at 1845 Woodmoor Drive, Monument, CO 80132.

The board also passed Resolution 23-02, which provides further details about the election, to be held on May 2, 2023, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., using the Woodmoor Improvement Association Community Center ("The Barn") as a polling place.

Two seats on the board will be filled by the election: the seat currently held by President Brian Bush,

who is term-limited, and the seat currently held by Director Barrie Towne, who was appointed to the board and therefore must run in the next election.

Candidates for the seats must file a Self-nomination and Acceptance with the district's Designated Election Official, Mandi Kirk, by Feb. 24, 2023. Kirk can be reached at MKirk@NortonSmithLaw.com.

Resident announces candidacy

Roy Martinez used the public comment portion of the agenda to introduce himself and announce his candidacy for a seat on the board. Martinez told the board he is retired but had worked as the director of the Water Works Foundation, as a senior staff member at the Water Research Foundation, and at HDR Engineering, as well as at other water-related jobs.

Loop Water Authority to hold first meeting

Shaffer told the board that the EPCRLWA had scheduled its first regular meeting for Jan. 19. The EPCRLWA is an intragovernmental agency formed by WWSD, the Town of Monument, Donala Water and Sanitation District, and Cherokee Metropolitan District to design, build and operate water re-use infrastructure that will treat and convey water from Fountain Creek to customers in the four participating districts. When complete, the infrastructure will give WWSD a way to move the water it acquired when it purchased Woodmoor Ranch to WWSD customers.

Shaffer said the EPCRLWA was working on administrative issues such as choosing a law firm and bank and on technical issues such as defining the water quality testing required to establish a baseline to be used in developing the water

The second changes the hierarchical nature of district committees.

Many committees are required by state or federal law. Some of these were placed as subcommittees under the Parent and Community Advisory Committee. Instead they are now independent committees.

To view the presentations from the meeting, please go to: [go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalm-](http://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalm-er/Board.nsf/vpublic)

[er/Board.nsf/vpublic](http://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalm-er/Board.nsf/vpublic).

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education usually meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of the month at the district's learning center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. Because the schools will be closed on Feb. 20 for Presidents Day, the board will meet on Feb. 21.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

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treatment requirements.

The first meeting of the EPCRL-WA is covered in a separate article on page 16 in this issue of *Our Community News*.

Woodmoor Lake refill timeline

Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine, in response to a question from Bush, told the board that the district's plan was to have Woodmoor Lake fully refilled by May 2024. Currently there is 28 feet of water in the lake, he said.

The construction of the new Lake Pump Station required the lake

to be completely drained, which is not typical during the annual cycle of filling the lake during the spring and emptying it during the high demand months in the summer. LaFontaine said water levels in the lake would rise during the spring of 2023 but not to the levels seen in a more usual year, due to the degree to which the lake was emptied to accommodate the upgrade to the pumping station. Then levels would fall again during the summer. By 2024, he said, levels would return to what they were previously.

- Highlights of operational reports**
- LaFontaine reported that there were five line breaks in December.
 - Shaffer reported that the district was replacing sewer saddles in the Woodmoor Forest neighborhood of the WWSD service area. Saddles are the connections between sewer main lines and residences.
 - Shaffer said he expected home construction in the Cloverleaf

development east of Lewis-Palmer High School would begin soon.

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 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.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Jan. 19

Wastewater study funding disputed

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At its first meeting of 2023, the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board discussed how to respond to a request from two partnering metropolitan districts to fund a study of the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, which DWSD co-owns with those districts. The board passed two annual housekeeping measures and heard an update on radium testing. It also appointed a backup representative to the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) and discussed the use of variable frequency drives in its wells.

Study begun without DWSD signature

District Manager Jeff Hodge told the board that Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) had initiated a study of the wastewater treatment facility they share with DWSD in 2022 without including DWSD in the scope of work or in the selection of the engineering company that would perform the analysis. Hodge said the other two districts had signed a contract with Carollo Engineers Inc. to perform the study, but DWSD had not been asked to sign the contract and had not done so. Hodge said DWSD was now receiving invoices for the study which it had never agreed to have done. In response to a question from Director Kenneth Judd, Hodge said the invoices had not been paid.

The proposal for the study specifies that the cost of the engineering fees for the entire project will not exceed \$125,000.

Hodge said TMD and FLMD claim that the work is considered a capital project and since they voted

to sign the contract, it overrides DWSD's role as the operator of the facility. Hodge told the board that he and the district's lawyer did not agree with this position.

Board President Wayne Vanderschuere said DWSD would be discussing who will pay for the work performed in 2022.

Hodge said DWSD had included funds for the study in its 2023 budget, but not in its 2022 budget and the initial work for the study had been done in 2022. He asked the board for direction on how to continue the discussion with TMD and FLMD.

Vanderschuere said although DWSD had included \$100,000 to evaluate the treatment facility in its 2023 budget he did not believe paying for expenses incurred in 2022 with funds from the 2023 budget would be approved by DWSD's auditors.

Vanderschuere and Hodge agreed that the study was worthwhile, and Vanderschuere said DWSD was committed to paying expenses incurred in 2023.

Judd asked why DWSD should pay any invoices for the study since DWSD did not sign the contract with Carollo Engineers. He argued for starting the evaluation process over from the beginning. Vanderschuere agreed and said DWSD would not pay invoices from 2022, would start the process fresh and would start with a request for proposals to do a study. Judd pointed out that DWSD had already paid the entire cost of two previous studies.

Hodge said he was working with DWSD's lawyer on a letter to be sent to Jim McGrady, district general manager at TMD, and Ann Nichols, district manager at FLMD. Judd requested that the letter di-

rectly say DWSD was declining to pay for the work done to date. The letter will also be sent to the board presidents of TMD and FLMD.

Housekeeping resolutions passed

The board voted unanimously to pass Annual Resolution 2023-1, which specifies operational details required for compliance with state and county rules and regulations. The resolution requires all legal notices to be published in the *Gazette* or the *Tri-Lakes Tribune* and all regular meetings to be posted on the district's webpage or at the district's offices, for example.

The district's web page is at <https://donalawater.org> and the offices are located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921.

The board also approved a schedule for its regular meetings, which are typically held on the third Thursday of each month at the office.

Radium level monitoring continues

Hodge told the board that another round of radium tests from the Holbein plant had been sent to the state. The previous two tests showed undetectable levels of radium in the water processed at the Holbein plant, he said. Four sets of test results below the state's standard for radium are required to meet standards, he said.

Alternative representative to EPCRLWA named

The board appointed Water Operator Ross Robinson to act as an alternate for Hodge at EPCRLWA meetings when necessary. EPCRLWA is designing and building infrastructure needed to divert water from Fountain Creek, treat it, and convey it to customers in four participating districts in El Paso County: Chero-

kee Metropolitan District, DWSD, the Town of Monument and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District.

The first board meeting of EPCRLWA is covered in its own article on page 16 of this issue of *OCN*.

Variable frequency drives save on energy

Hodge updated the board on the effort to equip the district's wells with variable frequency drives (VFD), which allow the motors that power well pumps to vary their output to meet changes in demand. Wells without VFDs are either pumping at full volume or completely off. VFDs are controlled by the software that manages the district's treatment plants, storage tanks, and other infrastructure, and can save DWSD electricity costs, Hodge said.

VFDs allow the pumps to run continuously and thereby avoid the high energy costs incurred by starting the pumps. VFDs also extend the life of pumps, saving replacement costs, Hodge said. DWSD's electricity provider will also pay rebates for the installation of VFDs. Hodge explained DWSD is also working with Mountain View Electric Association on reducing use of power during peak periods to avoid demand charges.

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 16 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Monument Sanitation District, Jan.18

Raspberry Lane repair launches

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

In his Jan. 18 manager's report, Monument Sanitation District (MSD) General Manager Mark Parker told the board a project to repair the sewer line on Raspberry Lane would begin in January. Parker covered other projects, policy changes, and operational details in his report. The board also voted on a resolution on public notices for meetings.

Raspberry Lane sewer line near failure

Parker said the sewer line on the west side of Raspberry Lane was clay pipe, and an inspection showed that failure was imminent. The repair would be done using a technique called sliplining that involves lining the clay pipe with a smaller carrier pipe without the need to disturb the asphalt by digging a trench to reach the line. The

sewer line on the east side of Raspberry Lane required other repairs before being sliplined, Parker said.

Parker told the board a preconstruction meeting would be held Jan. 20 and the work would begin on Jan. 23. Manhole repairs on Raspberry Lane have already begun.

Manager's report

Parker told the board that the lift station installed by the developer of the Willow Springs Ranch de-

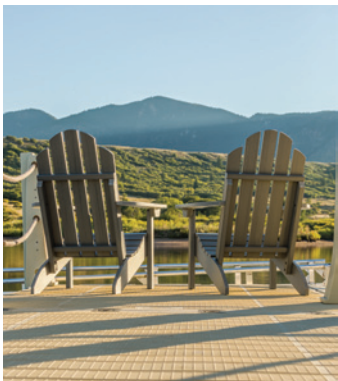
velopment was working well and processing about 8,000 to 10,000 gallons of wastewater daily. Parker said an official acceptance of the gravity waste system and the lift station would be issued soon.

Parker said MSD was changing its policy on payment of late fees to allow for some discretionary waiving of fees, based on payment his-



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MSD (Cont. from 14)

tory and other factors. In the past, no exceptions to late fees were allowed, he said.

Parker told the board he had been contacted by an engineer working for the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) concerning that district’s request to explore using the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility (TLWWTF) to process DWSD’s wastewater. At present, DWSD uses a treatment facility operated jointly with the Triview Metro District and the Forest Lakes Metro District. Those metro districts are considering partnering with Colorado Springs Utilities for wastewater treatment and abandoning the facility they share with DWSD. If that happens, DWSD has inquired about the possibility of routing its wastewater through MSD’s infrastructure to the TLWWTF for processing.

MSD’s boundary maps were updated in December, Parker said, as required by the state De-

partment of Local Affairs and El Paso County. Some properties surrounded by the MSD service area that were not part of the service area would need to be annexed, he said, adding that three of these were owned by the Town of Monument. Two of the properties are on Washington Street, he said.

MSD will begin posting signs in locations where projects that might inconvenience residents are due to begin, Parker said. MSD will put more effort into communicating changes to the public, he explained.

Resolution specifies posting sites

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 01182023-1, which requires notices of public meetings to be posted on the MSD website at <https://monumentsd.colorado.gov>. If internet service is interrupted for any reason, meeting notices will be posted at the MSD offices at 130 Second St. Notices must be posted 24 hours in advance of the meeting,

Correction

In the January issue of OCN, it was incorrectly reported that candidates for seats on the MSD board had until Feb. 24, 2024, to file a Self-Nomination and Acceptance form. In fact, that paperwork must be filed by Feb. 24, 2023, with Peggy Rupp, the Designated Election Official. Rupp can be reached at prupp@cogovlaw.com. OCN regrets the error.

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 Feb. 15. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, Jan. 19

Water re-use project holds first meeting

By James Howald

On Jan. 19, the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) held its first board meeting in Monument Town Hall. The board passed a resolution that lays out the operational rules it will follow and presented bylaws for future adoption. It chose a legal firm and an accounting firm to assist it. The board heard a proposal for a study addressing the feasibility of the water re-use project that the authority was formed to design and build. The board briefly discussed its strategy for water quality testing and heard a request from a developer to join the project. Finally, the board decided on a schedule for future meetings.

Background

The EPCRLWA, informally known as “the Loop project,” was formed in November 2022 by an Intergovernmental Agreement between Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), the Town of Monument (TOM), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) to address the depletion of groundwater that provides the bulk of water consumed in northern El Paso County by building infrastructure that would allow water, including treated effluent from the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLWWTF), to be re-used. In the case of WWSD, the project would provide a way to convey water from Woodmoor Ranch near Fountain to its consumers.

After the participating districts signed the agreement that created the EPCRLWA, it received \$4 million in American Recovery Plan Act funding from El Paso County.

The loop project, when complete, would divert water from Fountain Creek, use the Chilcott Ditch to transfer it to the Callahan Reservoir, and then, after treatment, pump it through 20.7 miles of new pipeline to the existing Sundance pipeline owned by CMD. The Sundance pipeline would move the water to its northern endpoint at Hodgen and Black Forest Roads. From there, the water would be pumped 11 miles through new pipelines to DWSD, TOM and WWSD for distribution to their customers.

The EPCRLWA board is made up of Mike

Foreman, Monument town manager; Jeff Hodge, DWSD district manager; Amy Lathen, TMD general manager; and Jessie Shaffer, WWSD district manager.

Other water providers may join the project as it moves forward.

Operating rules approved

The board voted to approve Resolution 2023-1, which establishes the procedures it must follow to comply with state law and El Paso County requirements. It also considered bylaws that will govern the board, such as the policies for unexcused absences of board members and how vacancies on the board will be filled. The bylaws will be voted on at a future meeting.

Law and accounting firms engaged

SpencerFane was approved as the authority’s law firm, with attorney Russell Dykstra taking the lead. The board engaged Fromm & Company LLC to handle accounting matters.

Operational study authorized

Dan Niemela of BBA Water Consultants Inc. proposed a study that would model the operational details of the infrastructure for the loop project and would validate the overall design by ensuring that it would meet the needs of the participating districts. He said he had performed related modeling for WWSD for 10 years.

Niemela explained that the model would expand on the initial modeling done in 2022 that confirmed the viability of the project. The expanded model would be based on a 24-year period from 1987 through 2020 and would account for many variables that come into play in a complex water system, such as water rights yields, reservoir, transit and treatment losses, amount of reusable effluent available, the storage capacity of the system, and demand during wet, average and dry years, among others.

Niemela estimated the study would cost \$54,000 and be complete in three months.

The board voted unanimously to authorize BBA Water Consultants to proceed with the study.

Water quality baseline discussed

Board President Jessie Shaffer said two proposals

for water quality testing had been received, both costing about \$90,000. Shaffer recommended using a wide range of tests initially to establish a baseline of water quality data that would be used later to design the treatment regimen. The board voted to table the issue to allow for further analysis.

Developer wants to join project

Shaffer emphasized that the four participants welcomed other water providers to join the effort.

Mike Flannery, the owner of Four-Way Ranch, a 6,500-acre development between Falcon and Peyton, expressed interest in joining the loop project. Flannery said he was looking for between 5,000 and 6,000 acre-feet of water for his development, which has its own metropolitan district.

The board took no action on Flannery’s request.

Meetings and workshops scheduled

The board voted to hold regular meetings on the third Thursday of every month at 9 a.m. in Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road, Monument. Cherokee Metropolitan District meets at 6250 Palmer Park Blvd., Colorado Springs.

Workshop meetings will be held every Thursday at 9 a.m. at rotating venues:

- First Thursday—Town of Monument
- Second Thursday—Cherokee Metropolitan District
- Third Thursday—venue to be decided
- Fourth Thursday—Cherokee Metropolitan District
- Fifth Thursday—Town of Monument

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Feb. 16, 2023 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held every Thursday at 9 a.m. at rotating venues. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Triview Metropolitan District, Jan. 19

Rate increases approved; NDS pipeline project moving along

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Jan. 19, the board approved water and wastewater rate increases effective Feb. 1, received an update on the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline project, received multiple other updates, and held an executive session to discuss water delivery infrastructure and wa-

ter and property acquisitions.

Director Marco Fiorito was excused.

Rate and fee increase discussion

District Manager James McGrady said a comprehensive rate study a few years ago looked at the district’s future revenue requirements. The study revealed that over the next five years the district needed to consider an annual 10% rate increase.

An increase was implemented last year, and this year it is necessary based on capital projections, he said.

Vice President Anthony Sexton said that last year the increase did not equate to 10% due to the adjustment of the rate tiers. It actually lowered water rates for the bulk of the users.

In 2022 the Tier 1 water rate was increased

by 2,000 gallons, from 6,000 to 8,000 gallons from previous years. Average ratepayers did not notice much of an increase. This year, the district does not have that option and a rate increase across the board is needed, Sexton said.

Director James Otis recommended the district include an explanation in the district newsletter to avoid any bad feelings. Two years ago, the rate increase blew up on social media, because everyone shut off their sprinklers due to an early freeze, and when they turned them back on the rates were higher, and that caused bad feeling until calmer heads prevailed, he said.

President Mark Melville asked what was causing the incremental rate increases over five years.

McGrady said the debt service, obtaining water rights, and the NDS pipeline project were causes. The district can pay for the vast majority of the NDS project with saved revenues, but it will deplete reserves. The budget has set aside about \$16 million on the NDS, but the total cost of the project is about \$20 million. The downturn in the housing market has also reduced revenue. It was common to sell 10-15 taps per month, and over 12 months that equated to 150-200 homes at \$26,000 per tap (\$2.6 million-\$3 million), but now the district is selling half that amount of taps. The district needs to pay the debt service, replenish reserves, and recapture the expenditure because of the slowdown in the housing market, and that is what is driving the rate increases, he said.

Treasurer/Secretary James Barnhart said that on the plus side, the district will have renewable water, but we cannot change or predict the housing market.

Sexton said that after the study, the district enacted the recommended plan, but it ought to conduct another study, because at the time the district did not know the cost of the NDS project.

Water attorney Chris Cummins said that when he resided in the neighboring Donala Water and Sanitation District, a 30% increase year over year was implemented for two or three years when they were purchasing renewable water resources. The costs are significant, and in the long term the resources are extremely beneficial to the residents, but the residents need to know in the monthly newsletter—knowing ahead of time did soften the blow for Donala customers, he said.

Otis said unlike TMD, Donala residents have a distinct lack of commercial revenue, and the TMD residents are used to having a gravy train.

McGrady said at the conception of the NDS project the district was fortunate to know the cost, but that was when the plan was to use 24-inch pipe, and when neighboring partners were onboard. To make matters awkward, piping increased in price, so the pipe was downsized to 16-inch pipe, and now the district is without partners in the project. A study in 2024 would be beneficial, because sooner or later the development will go away. Without the tap fees from the hundreds of homes, the district would not have been able to obtain water rights and build the NDS.

Melville said in retrospect the district has made capital purchases when interest rates were low, some very timely decisions that were needed for the future of the district.

McGrady said that most of the bonds that were issued had less than 3% interest rates.

Melville opened a public hearing for the 2023 water and wastewater rates and fees, effective Feb. 1.

Resident Jason Gross said McGrady did a good job explaining the reasons for the rate increases.

Hearing no other comments, Melville closed public hearing.

Later in the meeting, the board approved 4-0 the 2023 increase in the district's water and wastewater rates and fees.

Note: The new base rate (renewable water fee) increased by \$3; the metering and billing charge

per month increased by 50 cents. The volume rates per 1,000 gallons are: Tier 1: 0 to 8,000 gallons—increased by 62 cents. Tier 2: 8,001 to 20,000 gallons—increased by 95 cents. Tier 3: 20,001 to 30,000 gallons—increased by \$1.69. Tier 4: 30,001 to 40,000 gallons—increased by \$2.21. Tier 5: Over 40,000 gallons—increased by \$3.27. The wastewater base rate will be \$52.44 per month. For more information and the full rate table, visit: www.triviewmetro.com.

Northern Delivery System update

McGrady said the following:

- The plans for the NDS pipeline are almost at 100% and the pump station plans are at about 90%.
- The 16-inch pipe has been ordered, with about a 16-week delivery time. There are no other apparent supply delays.
- The installation of the pipeline will begin at TMD plant "C" (behind the Sanctuary Pointe development) and be installed from there toward Roller Coaster Road beginning in April. The district expects to have all the pipe installed by September.
- The convey, treat and deliver contract was expected to be delivered for comment by the end of January. The Colorado Springs Utility Board will then consider the contract in late February, followed by a review in March by the Colorado Springs City Council.
- Segment "C" of the NDS pipeline, from Agate Creek Park through Homeplace Ranch and up to serve Jackson Creek filings 3-6 is complete. The project went over cost by \$30,000 due to an additional bore of 30 feet at \$500,000 per foot and the addition of poured concrete bores to secure giant reverse anchors to hold the pipeline in place and prevent sagging. The final cost was \$1.699 million. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#tvmd.

District receives reimbursement

McGrady said the district received about \$537,147 from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to help reimburse the costs for the work the district completed on the south reservoir. The district has almost \$300,000 remaining on a 2022 loan at 2.05%.

Cummins said CWCB is almost begging districts to build water storage facilities.

Reservoir level outlook

Cummins said the snowpack statewide is terrific, particularly in the upper and lower Colorado River basin where it is about 158% above normal. The Arkansas River basin is at about 72% and maybe better by late January. The levels emphasize how necessary it was for the district to purchase water rights diversification and the development of adequate storage, because the long-term forecast is wet and cold this winter, and depending on where the low pressure passes along the Front Range, somewhere the district owns water rights that will receive snow, he said.

Higby Road widening project

McGrady said he had met with the Lewis-Palmer High School principal, the D38 school board, and the administrative staff to discuss the widening of Higby Road. The district shared its design for the widening project, and it was generally happy with the district's design, but the intersection has not been defined. A solid island with a pass through is included in the design from Bowstring Road to Jackson Creek Parkway. Students will be able to exit and travel east on Higby Road. It is a tough spot and school officials rejected a traffic circle that would create excessive traffic pouring into the neighborhoods along Bowstring Road, he said.

Otis said that the final plan needs to be idiot proof, unlike the traffic islands on Baptist Road that adults cannot navigate safely. The island should be just high enough that no one will plow over it, exactly like the islands along Jackson Creek Parkway, he said.

Gross said that he would prefer the district spend extra dollars during the widening of Higby Road to ensure the high school students

can navigate the Lewis-Palmer High School area safely. One life of a student saved will be worth it, he said.

Public Works, parks, and open space update

Superintendent Matt Rayno said the following:

- The Public Works Department had been clearing snow from the streets in Forest Lake Metropolitan District, another 3-4 miles of road in addition to TMD roads.
- Some minor repairs and preventive maintenance were made to the snow removal equipment.
- Public Works implemented additional webinar safety training for 2023, along with the regular weekly training.
- Staff are working around the weather to put the landscaping back at Agate Creek Park.
- Detention pond repairs and maintenance will be made in February, before the spring

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snow run-off begins.

- At the end of February and in early March, the pre-emergent herbicide weed control application will begin.
 - Snow clearing is the priority in the winter.
- Barnhart complimented the district on the snow clearing during the Jan. 17-18 storm, saying the Public Works staff did a phenomenal job.

Rayno said the crews worked 10-hour shifts to complete the major roads and side streets in the recent heavy storm, the staff are getting better educated with every storm, and he thanked the board for their compliments.

Otis asked about street parking problems during snow clearing operations.

Rayno said it happens just about everywhere, but it is the worst in Sanctuary Pointe where the roads are narrow, and due to the higher elevation of that neighborhood the roads become icy, and it is challenging. It is the homeowner's responsibility to clear driveways and sidewalks, and the staff make every effort to slow down and avoid spraying snow back on sidewalks, he said. For the Public Works snow removal policy, visit

www.triviewmetro.com.

Public comments

Resident Eric Lingle said at the request of a neighbor, the district installed signs in his neighborhood stating "private property of Triview." That same neighbor has also planted shrubs in the space and had thrown dog excrement into the open space to deter trespassers. It appears they are attempting to claim the space as their private property along an unofficial path that runs up to a district park. Those same neighbors ran out of their house last night to scream at children sledding on the open space in an effort to enforce the signs.

Lingle said it is a joy to see kids playing in the woods, and it does not bother him, but his grave concern is that children go home and complain to parents, and that could escalate into a bad interaction between neighbors. He has not seen anyone misusing the path in 12 years, and other neighbors are not bothered by the children playing. He can, however, hear everything that is going on whenever there is an interaction on

the path, and it would be beneficial if the district could incorporate the path into the greenbelt of the district and remove the signs, he said.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 7:15 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4)(a), (b), (e), to discuss acquisitions, receive legal advice, to negotiations, regarding water delivery infrastructure, water, and property acquisitions.

The district administrator confirmed that no decisions were made or approved when the board returned to the regular meeting.

The meeting adjourned around 8:35 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday every month at the district office at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 16 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <https://triviewmetro.com>.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Jan. 18

Deputy chief receives recognition upon retirement; property loss averted

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Jan. 18, the board recognized Deputy Chief James Rebitski on his retirement from the fire service, heard how crews averted a disaster, received multiple department updates, and heard about a new evacuation notification mobile application for smart phones and tablets.

Director Kiersten Tarvainen attended via Zoom.

Recognition received upon retirement

Chairman Nate Dowden announced the retirement of Rebitski after a 32-year career in the fire service. Dowden thanked Rebitski for his 14 years of service with the department, noting that he has been a mainstay and a stabilizing influence for the district. It has been a pleasure to work with him, said Dowden. He then requested the board approve Resolution 2023-02, recognizing Rebitski for his professionalism and outstanding, faithful dedication to the department, and for his leadership during a challenging period from August 2014 to Jan. 5, 2015 when he served as the interim fire chief.

The board unanimously approved the award. See photo and caption.

Rebitski thanked the board, the executive staff, and the community and said it had been a distinct honor to serve with the department, and the fire service had been everything to him. It has been fantastic to have the opportunity to finish his career with the current executive staff, he said, and he will never forget the adventures, the people he has worked with, and the citizens that are always supportive of the department. Rebitski said he was going on to a new adventure as he transitioned to retirement and would be a Hazmat coordinator with the El Paso County Office of Emergency Management.

Resident Linda Smith congratulated Rebitski for serving the district, and she wished him well in his new role.

Property loss averted

Deputy Chief of Operations Chris Piepenburg said the district responded to a house fire on Pinery Drive around mid-December. The district crews did a phenomenal job on this fire, he said, with the extensive training coming into play as fire was coming out of the chimney and moving into the attic. The job was completed after a couple of hours of overhaul with some salvage work. A 10-year-old alerted her family to the fire, saving lives and property, he said.

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said about 99.9% of



Above: From left are Treasurer Jack Hinton, Chairman Nate Dowden, Deputy Chief James Rebitski (holding his badge), Vice Chairman Jim Abendschan, and Director Chad Bhenken. The directors thanked the retiring Rebitski for his unwavering dedication to the fire service. Dowden presented Rebitski with a fire chief's badge before the photo was taken. *Photo courtesy of BFFRPD.*

the homeowner's personal property was saved, and he told the homeowner that about five years ago, the district had limited resources and staffing, and without the community investment in the department, the outcome could have been different.

Note: Monument Fire District (MFD) provided mutual aid, sending three engines to assist with the structure fire. *See the MFD article on page 21.*

Financial report

Treasurer Jack Hinton said that at the end of 2022, the district's assets were about \$1.939 million, which includes:

- \$724,402 in a money market deposit account.
- \$236,331 in the Emergency Reserve Fund.
- \$193,460 in the Capital Improvement Fund.
- \$137,157 in the TABOR Reserve Fund.

The board unanimously accepted the November and December financial reports as presented.

Langmaid said the district will be spending conservatively during the first quarter of 2023, averaging about \$325,000 per month for general operations from January through March.

The district has about \$945,000 for general operations for February through March and expects to receive the largest installment of property tax revenue by mid-March, said Hinton.

Administrative report

Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said the district had received the following revenues:

- Ambulance revenue for November was \$8,834 and for December was \$12,608.
- Tax revenue for November was \$29,238 and

\$31,270 in December.

Dunn said she was compiling a list of replacement auditors, with recommendations from neighboring fire districts. The list would be compiled for the next meeting.

Hinton said the district would need to jump on a replacement auditor fairly quickly to avoid a late audit.

Fleet/logistic update

Rebitski said the following:

- The 2005 Pierce mid-mount aerial ladder truck is further delayed due a supply shortage of replacement parts for the water way system. See www.ocn.me/v23n1.htm#bffrpd.
 - District mechanic Gavin Smith had completed minor repairs to vehicles throughout December.
 - A final inspection of the heaters installed in the barn/vehicle repair facility is pending.
- Langmaid said that modifications are being made to the Station 1 Community Room to secure and protect the department's investments before the public will be allowed to use the room.

Northern Delivery System access

Vice Chairman Jim Abendschan requested an update on the district's comments submitted in regard to the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline project. See www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#tvmd and www.ocn.me/v23n1.htm#bffrpd.

Rebitski said a very small piece of the NDS

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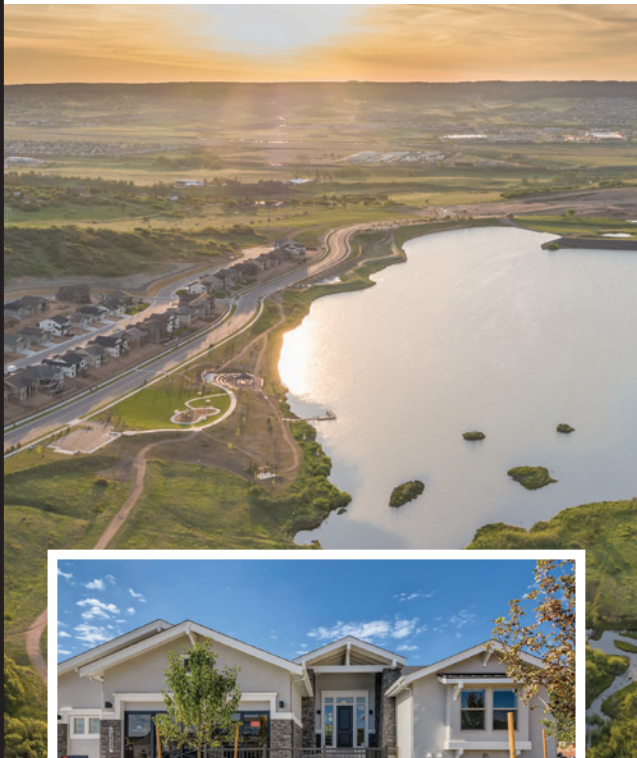
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BFFRPD (Cont. from 18)

pipeline project is located about 100 feet within the BFFRPD area of coverage. There is a good chance the Fire Department will be first on the scene in that area, and access has been requested should the district need to navigate a security system. The Colorado Springs Utilities water storage tank is located off Highway 83 and opposite Old Northgate Road, he said.

Evacuation planning

Rebitski said a county and state evacuation program called ZoneHaven is expected to be set up in mid-February and go live sometime in March or April. Residents will be required to download the ZoneHaven app to a phone or tablet to receive notifications to evacuate, remain on standby to evacuate, or shelter in place. ZoneHaven grids the county into evacuation zones, and each fire district is responsible for controlling those zones. The app will be linked to local news media and social media, it is designed to create a landslide of far-reaching notification, and it will be a great tool for our region, he said.

Langmaid said the platform has had great success in California. The app will help control the area to be evacuated, the speed of evacuation, and the return to property. The biggest issue in the past was the creation of gridlocks when everyone is evacuating at once. The public will need to know the zone they reside in and respond when alerted.

Training update

Piepenburg said the department completed about 1,729 hours of training in December, and in 2022 completed a total of 17,337 training

hours—we cannot ask for more training than that. The department completed only 500 hours of training before he arrived in 2019. Each shift continues to raise the bar going against each other to be the best at the end of the month, and he said:

- An eight-hour department leadership training session was completed with Echelon Front and Nick Lavery on Dec. 3. See www.ocn.me/v23n1.htm#bffrpd.
- Ice rescue training took place at the end of December.
- Several staff members continue certification testing.
- The district is planning to hire wildland technicians in February for March early wildland deployments.

Dunn said a film crew had attended an all-hands training event in December. See www.bffire.org. **Note:** Monument Fire District covered for BFFRPD Station 2 on Dec. 3 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to allow employees to attend training throughout the day. See the MFD article on page 21.

Langmaid said the following:

- The department will hold work sessions to come up with solutions for the remodeling of Station 2. The station is full to the brim with staff and regardless of the outcome of the Flying Horse North development, a plan is needed.
- The Station Alerting system cost \$90,000 to \$95,000, and a lot of capital improvements were made in 2022.
- Even if the board approves the purchase of a brush truck in 2023, the apparatus and

equipment availability is still unknown.

Board election nominations 2023

Dunn said the window for self-nominations for two board director positions would be posted on the district website from Jan. 22 until Feb. 24. For information, visit www.bffire.org.

Note: The seats for the May 2023 election will be for four-year terms for the seats that are set to expire in May and are currently held by Hinton and Abendschan. Self-nomination forms must be signed, witnessed, and submitted by Feb. 24.

Public meeting notifications

Dowden requested the board approve resolution 2023-01, approving the location for the posting and conducting of meetings, and the time and dates for the BFFRPD Board of Directors. The announcements for both regular and special meetings will be posted to the district website, www.bffire.org, at least 24 hours before each meeting, he said.

The board unanimously approved the resolution.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 15 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Jan. 25

Sun Hills storage agreement approved; subdistrict dissolution process begins

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting on Jan. 25, the board approved the Sun Hills property (formerly Station 3) for use as a storage facility; discussed the subdistrict dissolution process; heard about a 911 Hero award recipient; approved an accounting firm, a letter of engagement for the 2022 audit; and received multiple updates to include the Board of Directors' election and new station apparatus.

Secretary Larry Schwarz and Director Mike Forsythe were excused.

Vehicle storage agreement

District attorney Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm said the disposal of the Sun Hills (former Station 3) was on hold. In the interim she had drafted a vehicle storage agreement for the property to allow the American Red Cross and Emergency Incident Support (EIS) to store their vehicles and equipment at Station 3. The contract can be quickly retracted by the district with a 10-day termination provision and a liability clause should either agency damage each other's property/vehicles or any personnel injury occur. The contract allows the facility to be put to community use until a permanent decision is made, said Powell. See www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#dwfpd.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said that EIS had resumed use of the facility in mid-January to keep their vehicles out of the elements. Each agency will be required to hold a combined \$5 million insurance policy, he said.

Treasurer Duane Garrett recommended the board witness the proof of insurance and proof of insurance be stipulated in the contract.

President Mark Gunderman, Garrett and Director Charles Fleece agreed that Kovacs could simply witness the proof of insurance from EIS President Gary Nelson.

The board approved the vehicle storage agreement as drafted, 3-0.

Subdistrict dissolution process

Powell said the transfer process of stations and equipment as part of the merger process between DWFPD and the Monument Fire District (MFD) had been completed. See www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwfpd. The next phase is to dissolve the subdistrict (the majority of the residents in the north of the district) and raise the regular district's mill levy (southern enclave: small residential area at the south end of Voyager Parkway, between Old Ranch Road and Briargate Boulevard) to something more equitable with MFD. The board will be required to pass a resolution proposing a plan of dissolution to dissolve the subdistrict. The Wescott subdistrict will need to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the district (southern enclave), agreeing to take over services. MFD is already providing services to DWFPD, she said.

Gunderman said the majority of the Wescott residents will eventually see a drop in the mill levy by a few mills.

Powell said the subdistrict pays a total of 21.9 mills, consisting of 14.9 mills overlaid with the 7 mills that the southern district pays. The intent is to dissolve the subdistrict and then the 14.9 mills will go away. At the same time the district mill levy of 7 mills will be increased, but the vast majority of residents will see a decrease in the mill levy, said Powell.

Note: Monument residents are assessed 18.4 mills for fire protection services.

Powell said the documents may be ready for approval at the March meeting, but a special meeting in April (via Zoom only) could be necessary. The process will then require court approval for the plan of dissolution, she said.

Gleneagle resident receives award

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said the district had participated in a 911 Hero Award presentation to a 10-year-old girl in Gleneagle. The award was in recognition of the girl calmly relaying her message to dispatch services during a medical emergency that occurred at her

home. The award would typically be presented at school, but at her request the award was received at her home along with a sheriff's deputy, and MFD invited Santa along for the ceremony.

Chief's report

Kovacs highlighted a few items from the combined November and December report and said that after he became fire chief in January 2021, a five-year strategic plan was implemented in January 2022. The plan, set to expire in 2026, includes internal and external surveys and the ESCI study from May 2019. The district completed all the initiatives for 2022 with the exception of the standards of coverage and community risk assessment as part of the accreditation process and an engine company inspection program. The inspection program will be composed of firefighters providing annual life safety inspections, checking gas safety shutoffs, Knox-Box locations, fire hydrant locations, and special hazards. An independent company is developing program, but it has not been completed, and that is the only reason why that initiative was moved to 2023.

Battalion Chief Scott Ridings is "knee deep" in compiling the accreditation data, and completion is expected in the summer. He is proud of the staff for accomplishing all the 2022 tasks in addition to the unification process. And he said:

- Conversations continue with QuikTrip Corp., with a view to purchasing land for a future fire station/training tower site at Baptist Road and Terrazzo Drive.
- The district received a grant of \$1,488 from The Tri-Lakes Lions Club, and those funds will be used to purchase radio chargers for the squad vehicle.
- The squad vehicle will receive additional equipment and it is in service at "Shamrock" Station 5, Highway 83 and Stage Coach Road.
- A traditional "push-in" ceremony to announce the arrival of the anticipated new Pierce Engine for Station 4, Gleneagle Drive,

will be a community event, said Kovacs. For updates see www.monumentfire.org.

Note: The district conducts a push-in ceremony whenever a new engine is placed into service. In the past, these events have occurred during a shift change. See www.ocn.me/v22n5.htm#dwfpd and page 27 in www.ocn.me/v19n7.

Kovacs said that Pierce Manufacturing is taking up to 36 months to build engines, and the district will need to place orders soon.

Powell said that some orders are now taking 44 months.

Manufacturers are aiming to speed up the process, said Kovacs.

Note: The board of directors for both districts receive the same monthly updates for the combined district. For additional information, see MFD article on page 21. The monthly activity reports can be found at www.monumentfire.org.

Board of Directors election 2023

Powell said the district conducted a Board of Directors' election in May 2022, and that was the

last election cycle to complete the state-mandated transition from even to odd years. The positions held by Directors Fleece, Garrett and Schwarz are all up for four-year tenures in May 2023. If all goes as planned with the merger, the district will not exist by 2027. If no additional candidates complete the self-nomination forms by Feb. 24, the election can be canceled. Kovacs will be the designated election official, she said. For self-nomination form instructions, visit www.monumentfire.org.

The board approved Resolution 2023-01, calling for a regular election, 3-0.

Accounting services contract

Powell requested the board approve the accounting services of The Accounting Office Inc. for \$450 per month.

The board approved the accounting service, 3-0.

Financial report

The December financial report was unavailable for the January meeting.

2022 audit engagement

Kovacs requested the board review and consider approving a letter of engagement for Erickson, Brown, and Kloster LLC to conduct the 2022 audit. DWFPD used the same auditors for the 2021 audit, and the audit will include a presentation to the board, said Kovacs.

The board approved the engagement letter, 3-0.

The board meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Meetings are usually held every other month on the fourth Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for March 22 at 4:30 p.m. Meeting attendance is open to the public in person or via Zoom. For joining instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Monument Fire District, Jan. 25

Palmer Lake declines ambulance contract; district leads county mass casualty plan

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Jan. 25, the board discussed a letter from the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) declining Emergency Medical Services (EMS) from the district; heard about district staff leading a county mass casualty plan; received multiple updates; and held an executive session to discuss a meet and confer plus agreement and providing EMS service to neighbors.

Treasurer Tom Kelly was excused.

Director Jason Buckingham joined the meeting but was unable to take part in the voting due to work commitments.

Ambulance service contract declined

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said that in 2015, Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District and the Town of Palmer Lake established an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to provide ambulance service to Palmer Lake. In that agreement, upon request from the Palmer Lake Fire Department (PLFD), the district would dispatch an ambulance for each EMS response in the town. The district in return received a fee of \$500 for each transport out of Palmer Lake. Over time the fee has increased to match the consumer price index.

Note: PLFD and the Town of Palmer Lake administrator were informed via letter in December that a price increase would take effect Jan. 1, 2023 and MFD would begin charging \$588.25 per transport. A price increase also occurred in 2021, charging the town \$544.18 for each transport.

On Jan. 24, the district received a letter from PLBOT giving 90 days' notice to terminate the IGA for service. Before receiving the letter, there had been no communication regarding the matter with the Town of Palmer Lake or the interim Fire Chief John Vincent of PLFD. Kovacs said the district values the relationship with Palmer Lake, and though we serve the residents indirectly through these various agreements, MFD remains committed to that relationship with the residents and to assisting Palmer Lake. He met with Vincent before the board meeting, and he recommended the IGA be continued. Vincent was due to meet with Palmer PLBOT on Jan. 26, and hopefully he will be able to convey the district's concern to the trustees. There is time to reach an agreement in the ensuing 90 days, Kovacs said. See PLBOT article on page 1.

Vice President Roger Lance said a lot of questions came to mind after reading the letter. What will they do for EMS ambulance service now that Palmer Lake no longer receives AMR service out of the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) Station 4, on Gleneagle Drive. It does

not make sense that they would rely on AMR ambulance from Colorado Springs when MFD is five minutes down the road, he said.

Kovacs said AMR is still the ambulance provider for Palmer Lake and they handle over 90% of their EMS calls. MFD only sends an ambulance to assist high acuity calls upon request from the PLFD. The town is billed quarterly, and they are not billed if an ambulance is canceled. They were billed about \$8,700 for 16 calls last year. There is no mutual aid agreement, because Palmer Lake cannot reciprocate, he said.

Lance said that after 90 days, MFD will provide support out of the goodness of our hearts.

Kovacs said the subject will be discussed in executive session to receive direction from the board for future service.

President John Hildebrandt (attending via Zoom) said he was disappointed the district received the letter declining ambulance service from the Town of Palmer Lake, and he said the following:

- The letter states Palmer Lake's wish to continue a prosperous relationship, but he is unsure what that means.
- MFD has received comments about double dipping, but the district also charges Monument residents for EMS service.
- The concept everyone needs to understand is the district will bill a resident plus the Town of Palmer Lake.
- MFD receives property taxes from Monument residents. Those taxes provide personnel and equipment to support services.
- MFD does not receive property taxes from Palmer Lake, so the service is billed as a pass through because they cannot provide service.
- The funds MFD receives help provide the service so they can respond, and the residents in both districts are not treated any differently.
- No one should perceive that MFD will not respond in the event of an emergency, and the district wants to remain good neighbors and provide EMS.
- The service to Palmer Lake does cost MFD money, and the situation needs to be resolved.

Kovacs said he hopes the concerns can be resolved and the IGA can be reinstated or redrafted to address any concerns. Ambulance service is valuable, accounting for 87% of MFD service calls. The billing does not exceed the expense of the service provided, and the district does not profit providing the service, he said. The set fee billed to Palmer Lake per call is still at the ex-

pense of MFD.

District takes lead in mass casualty plan

Kovacs said Battalion Chief of EMS Sean Pearson had been tasked with developing a mass casualty exercise for the district. The project grew exponentially, as all the partner agencies participated in the Regional Mass Casualty Incident Plan. The district received a \$45,000 grant for county responders to receive equipment to carry out the plan, Kovacs said. Initiatives coming out of MFD are making a difference in the county. Kudos to Pearson and EMS Coordinator Stephanie Soll for establishing the plan—it became much larger than was initially assumed, he said.

EMS update

Kovacs said:

- Two district ambulances responded to the Club-Q shooting in November to assist the Colorado Springs Fire Department and AMR. Both units were canceled during the staging of the emergency response.
- The district responded to six of the nine EMS transport requests made by AMR so far in January. In January 2022 the district received 60 requests from AMR.
- The district is working on a draft consolidated agreement for a county agency response to AMR requests.

Note: Station 4 on Gleneagle Drive continues to handle the highest EMS call volume in the combined district of DWFPD and MFD.

2022 auditor approval

Lance requested the board approve the letter of engagement for Erickson, Brown, and Kloster LLC to conduct the 2022 audit.

Director Terri Hayes asked if the cost of the audit had increased.

Kovacs said the cost had increased considerably from \$6,500 in 2022 to about \$17,100, with an additional \$1,200 for amendments, plus expenses. The quote is in line with other auditors, but less than some competitors in the area. The cost does not include the DWFPD 2022 audit, he said.

The board approved the audit engagement letter, 5-0.

Financial report

Secretary Mike Smaldino read the financial report as of Dec. 31, 2022, and said the following:

- The district's overall revenue for 2022 was about \$15.2 million, about 103% of the projected revenue budget of about \$14.7 million.
- The district's overall expenses for 2022 were about \$10.5 million, about 95.9% of the pro-

jected expense budget set at about \$10.9 million.

Note: The combined bank balances total at year end was about \$14.3 million. The district had about \$8.1 million in the General Operating Fund year end. About \$1.3 million was distributed among the Capital Fund account, the Fleet Capital/Public Fund, and the TABOR reserve fund.

Kovacs said the 2022 budget was very difficult because of the consolidation process of merging DWFPD with MFD and due to the unexpected departure of AMR from Station 4 (Gleneagle Drive) on Jan. 1, 2022. The departure created the need for a fourth ambulance, along with the increased cost of fuel, toilet paper, utilities, and the increased shared cost of the building management at the administration offices. The district also had to bring the Wescott fleet up to district standards in 2022. The district remained under budget despite all the additional expenses last year, and he is confident that most of the costs were one-time expenditures and there were no frivolous expenses, he said.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 5-0.

Board/citizen/staff comments

Hildebrandt said the end-of-year healthy financial report substantiates the board’s decision to approve the mill levy match to offset the state Legislature’s two-year temporary reduction in the Residential Assessment Rate. *See www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#mfd.*

Gary Nelson, president of Emergency Incident Support, thanked the board and the executive staff for managing to remain 5% under budget and 3% over the projected revenue at the end of 2022, especially after the merger of DWFPD and MFD. *See DWFPD article on page 20.*

Note: The 2022 and 2023 budget documents can be viewed at www.monumentfire.org. Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District is doing business as Monument Fire District but has not legally changed the district name.

Station 1 Training Center update

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said the district is still evaluating the options for the MFD Training Center but determined the Town of Monument site off Mitchell Avenue was not big enough to accommodate the district training site. The district is looking at a 4-acre site off Baptist Road/Terrazzo Drive and also evalu-

ating a regional training approach with Colorado Springs Fire Department and Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District.

Director Terri Hayes asked about the future of the 14 acres the district purchased adjacent to Station 1 in 2019 and said the site should not go unused after the expense of purchasing the property. *See www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#tlmfpd.*

Kovacs said there was a possibility of Front Range Fire Apparatus using the site for an apparatus repair facility. If acreage cannot be purchased in the southwest of the district, the site will be used for training. It will not go to waste, he said.

Chief’s report

Kovacs highlighted the following from the November and December monthly activity report and said:

- Firefighter Christian Schmidt was elected as the new Local 4319 president. The district and the board are looking forward to working with him in 2023.
- Lt. Jon Bodinsky received the department’s “step-up” award for raising \$14,770 for the annual Fill the Boot campaign in support of Muscular Dystrophy.
- An orientation to introduce the new hires and their families to the district gave everyone the opportunity to visit all the crews at the five stations and meet with the Local 4319. The event was well received, and the staff enjoyed the meeting.
- The district is working with OZ Architects to rebuild Station 3 on Woodmoor Drive. The relocated station will include district administrative offices on land just north of the YMCA.
- The 2005 Smeal Type 1 Engine was sold to Elliot Fire Department, Iowa, for \$40,000.
- An ambulance went in for repair at a Ford dealership and returned with \$1,500 worth of lights missing. The district filed a police report, and the dealership will be reimbursing the district for the lights.
- The district completed 1,571 training hours for November through December, 2022.

Note: Included in the chief’s December report was the provision of staffing by MFD Company 512 to an all-hands Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District training day, to allow their Station 2 staff to attend training. MFD also provided mutual aid assistance to a house fire on Pinery

Drive in December. *See BFFRPD article on page 18.* DWFPD and MFD district boards receive the same monthly activity report. *See DWFPD article on page 20.* The reports can be viewed at www.monumentfire.org.

Board of Directors’ election 2023

Resolution 2023-01 calls for a regular election to elect four board directors, the seats currently held by Directors Buckingham, Hayes, Lance, and Tom Tharnish.

Kovacs said the 2023 election will complete the process of going from even- to odd-year elections, and terms will be for four years. Self-nomination forms will need to be submitted by Feb. 24. If the district receives more than four self-nomination forms, an election will be held. For self-nomination instructions, visit www.monumentfire.org.

Vice President Roger Lance announced that he will not run for re-election in 2023.

In a roll call vote, the board approved the election, 5-0.

The board also approved the 2023 Board of Directors Policy Manual, 5-0.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 7:45 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4)(b), to confer with district attorney Maureen Juran of Widner Juran LLP for the purposes of receiving legal advice on a specific legal question to review a meet and confer plus agreement; and pursuant to 24-6-402(4)(e), to instruct negotiators on a matter subject to negotiations concerning the provision of ambulance service within Palmer Lake.

Kovacs confirmed after the meeting returned to the regular meeting that no action was taken. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Meetings are usually held every month on the fourth Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 22 at 6:30 p.m. Meeting attendance is open to the public in person or via Zoom. For joining instructions, agendas, minutes, and updated, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Jan. 10, 17, and 24

New chair and vice chair appointed

By Helen Walklett

During January, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) appointed a new chair and vice chair.

Chair and vice chair appointed

At the Jan. 10 BOCC meeting, the commissioners appointed Commissioner Cami Bremer as chair and Commissioner Carrie Geitner as vice chair. Bremer takes over the role from Commissioner Stan VanderWerf, who chaired the board for the previous two years. Bremer served as his vice chair.

License agreement with the Town of Monument

Also at the Jan. 10 meeting, the commissioners approved a license agreement with the Town of Monument relating to the New Santa Fe Regional Trail, which is operated and maintained in the county by the Community Services Department. The license agreement enables the town to construct a water transmission line underneath the trail near Fourth Street as part of its 2-million-gallon water tank project.

Highway 105A project

During January, the commissioners made two decisions relating to the Highway 105A project. They approved a memorandum of agreement and a special warranty deed concerning property owned by Cheyenne Village Inc. for which

county will pay \$252,000. The commissioners also approved a reimbursement agreement between county, the Pikes Peak Regional Transportation Authority, and Qwest Corp. dba CenturyLink QC (Lumen) concerning the relocation, adjustment, or installation of facilities owned by Lumen necessitated by the project. The Highway 105A project will improve the highway to four lanes between I-25 and Lake Woodmoor Drive.

Other decisions

- Jan. 10—the commissioners approved the issuance of an ambulance service license

to the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District. The one-year license runs until Dec. 31, 2023.

- Jan. 10—approved the acceptance of certain streets within the Settlers Ranch filing No. 2C subdivision into county’s road maintenance system.
- Jan. 17—approved the final release of a \$58,712 bond for the Flying Horse North golf course and associated private roads.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO), Jan. 21

New board introduced; guest speakers discuss transportation, impact fees

By Marlene Brown

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) held its bi-monthly meeting on Jan. 21. The first order of business was the introduction of the new Board of Directors that was voted in at the November meeting.

The new board is made up of President Mike Aspenson (Vista Clara Villas HOA), absent; Vice President Bob Swedenburg (Gleneagle North HOA); Secretary Roy Martinez (High Pines Own-

ers Association); Treasurer Tim Miller (Tall Pines Ranch HOA); Director of Community Outreach Dave Betzler (Red Rock Ranch HOA); Larry Oliver, director of Membership (Gleneagle Civic Association); Member-at-Large Harold Larson (Heights Property Owners Association).

Committee reports included one by Betzler that NEPCO is applying for a grant for a new laptop, speakers, projector, and microphone with upgrading capabilities for meeting presentations

and communications.

Beth Lonnquist (Red Rock Ranch HOA) of the Wildfire Preparedness Committee reported that with the wildfire probability so high that evacuation is the key. Go to <https://co-pub.coloradoforestatlas.org/#/> to learn more. Creating a fire mitigation committee for each HOA is recommended. For more information, contact Lonnquist at RRRHOABeth@gmail.com.

Bob Mooney, chair of Transportation and Land Use, reported that at the Monument Planning Commission meeting on Jan. 17, the developer withdrew the request for Monument Ridge East and West annexation. Also, the developer withdrew the project for Caliber at Woodmoor Multi-family rezone due to the economic downturn.

In November, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners approved the sketch plan for Flying Horse North for 846 single-family residential lots, with a hotel, golf club, restaurant, and fitness center, Mooney said. Many letters of opposition are on file. The next steps include the developer returning with a revised PUD plan and

preliminary plans. Schedule public hearings for approval of specific plans, revised traffic studies, and water sufficiency reports. He requested volunteers with no experience necessary to help with the Transportation and Land Use Committee. Training will be provided. Contact Mooney at bobmooney01@msn.com.

Guest speaker John Liosatos, transportation director for the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), explained how PPACG works with several counties, towns, and cities in the area including El Paso County, Park County, and Teller County on transportation planning and funding. There are several sources of funding, including the gas tax, vehicle license tax, sales, tools, impact fees, and state and local grants. Long-range plans through year 2050 are being updated through public involvement and future regional development. Transportation planning for the Pikes Peak area involves coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Tri-County stakeholders. Funding is available for jurisdictions for local transportation priorities. More in-

formation: www.ppacg.org/transportation.

Greg Roosevelt, member of the county Impact Fee Committee and the county Community Services Block Grant Committee, explained that impact fees are paid by developers for the roads surrounding the development. Fees are used for roads, bridges, and stormwater infrastructure. The road impact fees are paid before the recording of the final plat. Fees vary for single-family, multi-family, hotels, or general commercial structures. Many fees are paid at time that the building permit is issued. For more information, see <https://publicworks.elpasoco.com/road-impact-fees>.

The next NEPCO meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on March 11 at the Woodmoor Barn. Guest speakers scheduled are Jim Reid, El Paso County Office of Emergency Management, and Mark Gunderman, president of the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District. For more information about NEPCO, see <http://nepco.org>.

Marlene Brown can be reached at marlenebrown@ocn.me.

January Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

The year has started off on the cold and snowy side, which is good news for us as we have started the snow season with a deficit so far. Temperatures were well below normal, especially for the second half of the month, and snowfall was above normal, punctuated by an Arctic air intrusion to end the month. January is normally one of our driest months, so to get a little extra moisture to start the year is always welcome.

The new year started off with some snowfall but relatively mild temperatures. Two to four inches of snowfall accumulated between the 1st though the 3rd, but temperatures still managed to reach the upper 20s to low 30s each afternoon. Quiet conditions returned for the next week with dry conditions from the 4th through the 10th and temperatures at or above normal. Relatively mild and breezy conditions set up from the 8th to the 10th. These westerly winds helped jump temperatures into the low 50s each afternoon and more importantly kept overnight lows warm, with most areas staying above freezing on the 10th.

A quick-moving cold front temporarily disturbed this pattern with cooler temperatures and some light snow accumulation on the 11th. Temperatures began to warm back up over the next few days, eventually reaching our warmest temperature of the month on the 14th, with upper 50s reached that afternoon.

The general weather patterns in the region started to shift soon thereafter with a more northwesterly flow taking hold. This opened the door for a series of cold fronts and storm systems

to move through the region. Every day from the 15th through the 31st was below average from a temperature perspective, the exception being the 27th when values were right about average for the day.

A series of weather systems brought snowfall on several days. The heaviest snow occurred from the evening of the 17th through the evening of the 18th. This storm accumulated 4-8 inches and produced a lot of blowing snow, causing some major travel issues in the region. Then new storms moved through every three days or so, with a few inches from the afternoon of the 20th to the afternoon of the 21st, and another couple inches from the morning of the 23rd through the morning of the 25th, and a final couple of inches from the 28th through the 30th.

The final event was associated with cold Arctic airmass that brought in some near-record cold temperatures. This push was moisture-starved, with generally light snowfall but plenty of cold air. Temperatures dropped well below zero on the evening of the 29th with morning lows 10-15F degrees below zero on the 30th. Highs of course were also cold, barely reaching the teens on the 29th and even colder on the 30th. A warmup began on the 31st, but even then we couldn't break above freezing.

A look ahead

February is often a transition month as we move from the dry and cold conditions in December and January toward relatively warmer and wetter conditions of March and April. Total precipitation for the month averages around an inch,

which falls in the form of snow and accumulates around 20 inches. Average high temperatures are in the 30s. It can get very cold in February with Arctic air making brief pushes into the region. However, days begin to get a little longer, which leads to some nice, sunny days, and the snow that does fall begins to melt faster.

January 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	35.9° (-4.2°)
100-year return frequency value	max 48.4° min 30.8°
Average Low	13.4° (0.0°)
100-year return frequency value	max 26.6° min 6.6°
Highest Temperature	58° on the 14th
Lowest Temperature	-12° on the 30th
Monthly Precipitation	0.99"
	(+0.28" 39% above normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 1.56" min 0.01"
Monthly Snowfall	21.6"
	(+4.2", 10% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	45.5"
	(-7.3", 14% below normal)
	(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Season to Date Precip.	0.99"
	(+0.28" 39% above normal)
	(the precipitation season, Jan 1 to Dec 31)
Heating Degree Days	1251 (+154)
Cooling Degree Days	0

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Whispers of nature and wildlife around us

By the staff at Covered Treasures

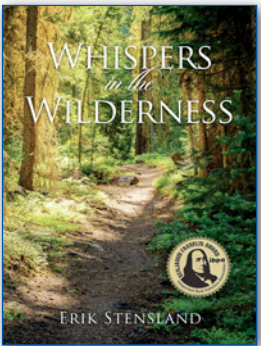
"The mountains are calling and I must go."—
John Muir

Many of us live in Colorado because we are at home in the outdoors. These books transport you to the outdoor world when you can't be in it and prepare you for the times you can be in it.

Whispers in the Wilderness

By Erik Stensland (Morning Light Photography) \$21.95

Landscape photographer Erik Stensland has spent many years exploring the hidden corners of Rocky Mountain National Park. Time alone in nature has led him to explore the hidden wilderness that



resides deep within us all. Using short reflections on nature paired with gorgeous photographs, he reminds us of wisdom that our busy world has forgotten. This is the first book in the Whispers series. The second book is *The Journey Beyond: Learning to Live Beautifully in a Troubled World*.

Colorado Wild and Beautiful

By Glenn Randall (Farcountry Press) \$32.95

Glenn Randall presents 125 images culled from 30 years of exploring the Centennial state. He backpacked alone into the heart of the state's most spectacular mountain ranges, traveling by foot, snowshoes, skis, and rafts. During his journeys, Randall has photographed the state's abundant natural beauty, historical sites, wildlife, and outdoor adventurers. Photographs are not enhanced digitally or in the darkroom.

The Lost Art of Reading Nature's Signs: Use Outdoor Clues to Find Your Way, Predict the Weather, Locate Water, Track Animals—and Other Forgotten Skills

By Tristan Gooley (Experiment) \$17.95

Writer and navigator Tristan Gooley wants to help you understand nature's clues. He shares more than 850 tips for forecasting, tracking, and more, gathered from decades spent walking



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An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us

By Ed Young (Random House) \$30
The Earth teems with sights and textures, sounds and vibrations, smells and tastes, electric and magnetic fields. But every animal, including humans, is enclosed within its own unique sensory bubble, perceiving but a tiny sliver of our immense world. Ed Young coaxes us beyond our own senses, bringing the joy of discovery to encounter fish that fill rivers with electrical messages, what bees see in flowers, what songbirds hear in their tunes, what dogs smell on the street, and so much more. He tells of pivotal discoveries as well as the many mysteries that remain unsolved.

The Hawk's Way: Encounters with Fierce Beauty

By Sy Montgomery (Atria Books) \$20
When falconer Nancy Cowan allowed Sy Montgomery to work with her magnificent birds of prey, it was the start of a deep love affair for Montgomery with hawks. Montgomery spent time getting to know their extraordinary abilities and instincts. Hawks are deeply emotional animals, quick to show anger and frustration, and can hold a grudge for years. But they are also loyal and intensely aware of their surroundings. This mesmerizing account features 16 pages of color photographs.

The Secret Network of Nature: Trees, Animals, and the Extraordinary Balance of All Living Things

By Peter Wohlleben (Greystone Books) \$17.95
Master storyteller and forester Peter Wohlleben introduces us to the latest scientific discoveries and recounts his insights from decades of observing nature, showing us how to recapture our sense of awe and see the world around us with new eyes. Wohlleben describes the interplay between animals and plants and answers such questions as: How do they influence each other? Do lifeforms communicate across species? And what happens when this finely tuned system gets out of sync?

Slow Birding: The Art and Science of Enjoying the Birds in Your Own Backyard

By Joan E. Strassmann (Tarcherperigee) \$27
Evolutionary biologist Joan E. Strassmann introduces readers to the joys of birding. This guide features detailed portraits of bird species and the scientists who have discovered and observed them; what to look for when slow birding, so that you can uncover clues to the reasons behind specific bird behaviors; bird-focused activities to open your eyes to the fascinating world of birds and how their behaviors change from day to day and season to season.
Until next month, happy reading.
The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.

February Library Events

Winter Adult Reading Program is underway

By Harriet Halbig
The 2023 Winter Adult Reading Program will run from Feb. 1 to March 31. Patrons who register and log 30 days of activities will receive a Rocky Mountain Chocolate bar and a program mug.

Each day you read for 30 minutes or more, do activities such as join a book club, read a new author or genre, write a review, or attend one of a list of library programs—log that day on the game card you can pick up at the library.

Those who complete 30 days of activities or reading are also entered in a drawing for the grand prize. Three Samsung tablets with covers will be awarded. Or pick up the latest edition of *District Discovery* magazine for all the details.

To register for the program, stop by the library or go to our web site, ppld.org.

Do you love the library? In celebration of National Library Lovers Month, the library is encouraging patrons to submit a letter telling us what you love about the library. Submit entry forms at the library and be entered for some great prizes including tickets for four to the Olympic and Paralympic Museum or dinner for two at a restaurant at the Broadmoor. One entry per person, please.

The library will be open on Presidents Day, Feb. 20.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Jan. 19

Historical Society holds annual meeting

By Marlene Brown
The Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) held its annual Potluck and Membership Meeting at the Palmer Lake Town Hall on Jan. 19. It was the first Potluck and Membership Meeting since the pandemic began in 2021. The mission statement of PLHS is to preserve, protect, promote, and provide access to historical data, artifacts, and other items of significance relating to the Palmer Divide area. The area includes Palmer Lake, Monument, School District 38, the United States Air Force Academy and east to Table Rock.

PLHS supports and maintains the Lucretia Vaile Museum, 66 Lower Glenway St., through its programs throughout the year. Volunteers are needed to help at the museum and other events. Contact Roger Davis, museum director and curator, at palmerdividehistory.org/volunteer-opportunities/.

Monthly events include the Father's Day Ice Cream Social in June, Chautauqua in August, the Palmer Lake Chili Supper and Star Lighting in November, and the Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt and Ceremony in December.

After nominations and the membership voted, Diane Kokes joined the board as the new vice president. Jim Sawatzki surprisingly resigned as president earlier in the day, so the position is now open.

The meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30, at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. For more information, go to palmerdividehistory.org.

Marlene Brown can be reached by email at malenebrown@ocn.me.

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Shop Tri-Lakes and
Black Forest!**



Above: The Palmer Lake Historical Society resumes the Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting for the first time since 2021. *Photo by Diane Kokes.* **Below:** The PLHS board was reinstated at the annual meeting. Diane Kokes, the new vice president, is on the far left. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*



High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Bringing nature indoors: seedlings, plants, and soil

By Janet Sellers

February indoor gardening

Our coldest month is typically February here, but we still can start up some of our gardening and nature plans now. It is a perfect time to plan the spring garden. Planning is key to success. With a plan at hand, taking action is simple and offers an organized method to work from, even if we change our plans.

It is deceptively simple. Starting with soil and seeds, a quick and simple indoor starter plan can include a daily calendar for soil checks and watering reminders. Making a mini-greenhouse from a plastic salad greens container or milk jugs is as easy as container washing, rinsing, filling with soil and seeds, and covering. The key seems to be a bit of air flow and even moisture. This year I am going to try the layers of pinecones, soil, seed, and water sprinkling.

My mini-greens salad containers with indirect light will stand in for a real greenhouse. I have a lot of saved seeds, so I'll choose veggie or flower seeds. Deer- and pest-resistant plants that protect the garden include marigolds, mint, and "stinky" plants like lavender, iris, purple sage and salvias. Alas, the iris, lilies, daffodils, and most bulb flowering plants are toxic to pets and I avoid them. My garden is full of purple sage, asters, and wildflowers.

Potted indoor plants

I love to have pet-safe flowering indoor no-soil plants like cymbidium orchids around the house. Indoor plants with soil can be tricky with root issues and can get root rot or mold quickly. That's likely a drainage problem, overwatering, or mold. It's best to make oxygen available by aerating the soil and finger-checking the soil top and mid-section often. The cure is in the soil and

microbe health, not fertilizer or adding water. Moisture balance is key for microbial health.

Indoor potted plant health

Smell the soil—it should smell pleasant. Any unpleasant smell indicates bad soil and that means soil replacement: Remove the plant with soil from the pot; check soil. If the soil smells bad or the root is balled up in the pot, shake off the soil onto paper (and toss in the garden), rinse the roots, and repot with new potting soil. I put pinecones at the bottom of the pot, add soil part way, place the plant, then fill up with moist potting soil and water immediately, letting it all drain well.

Janet Sellers is an avid lazy gardener, letting Mother Nature lead the way for indoor and outdoor gardening and landscaping. We'd love to know your spring garden tips, sent them to JanetSellers@ocn.me.

On the Trail (in memory of Tim Watkins)

Trail etiquette

By Steve Pate

Last spring, the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) assembled equestrians and others to get input on how to share trails with hikers, trail runners, and mountain bikers. Here are the resulting recommendations to a Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation committee which led to signs in some open space areas. These signs suggest to trail users who encounter equestrians:

- Slow down. Horses are "prey" animals, always on the lookout for predators. Hikers and bikers should slow down and move to the side of the trail.
- Say "Hello." Talking calms the horse and reassures the rider.
- Share the trail. Horses always have the right-of-way.

OCN previously shared Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) guidelines for mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrians sharing trails. FOMP's guidelines reiterated those guidelines set forth by TOSC.

Here are guidelines for cyclists and hikers:

Cyclists

- Ride with a bell. Announce your presence in a friendly way. Try not to startle other users.
- When passing hikers, cyclists must yield. Cyclists are responsible for avoiding crashing into someone (or entering their safe space). Ride in control at all times. Be able to slow down and stop if necessary to negotiate a safe pass. Often, it's easier for a hiker to move to the side of the trail to let you pass, and most hikers will do this if there is a safe place and you communicate with them. Thank them and continue on your way.
- If you are riding downhill and encounter someone riding uphill, you must yield to them. Usually, this means slowing and getting to the side or stopping. Get as far off the trail as possible and allow the uphill rider to ride past.
- If you encounter an equestrian, slow down, stop if necessary and engage in a conversation about the best way to pass.
- If there are others in your group, let the person you are passing know how many are behind you.
- If you stop for any reason, move off to the side—don't block the trail.

Hikers/trail runners

- Maintain situational awareness. Watch for other trail users.
- Cyclists are required to yield to hikers and equestrians, but it is much easier for hikers to step off a narrow trail than it is for cyclists

to do so.

- Avoid standing along the outside edge of a switchback/climbing turn. Most cyclists prefer to use the outside of the turn—it's safer and easier to get through the turn.
- If hiking in groups, spread out so that other users can pass safely.
- If you stop along the way, move to the side—don't block the trail.
- Please keep all pets under control, especial-

ly excitable, unruly, or aggressive ones, so they don't negatively impact or injure other users.

Equestrians

As stated above, equestrians have the right of way. When you see someone approaching on horseback, please step aside, say "hello," and control your dog if you have one with you.

Steve Pate can be contacted at stevepate@ocn.me



Please stay on designated trails and do not cut across. Above: Monument Preserve, Jan. 14. Below: Santa Fe Open Space, Jan. 17. Photos by Steve Pate.



Art Matters

Valentines and the fates of flirts



By Janet Sellers

Valentine’s Day is just around the corner on Feb. 14. It’s a day to exchange gifts, particularly for giving a thoughtful gift to one’s sweetheart. In our culture, point-blank asking what the giftee wants has been taboo for some time. Somehow, asking what a person wants makes the giver look less thoughtful. But this shouldn’t be so!

When artwork is a gift, it can be a heartfelt, authentic gesture. Since taste and personality enter into the equation, the joy is optimized with a preplanned surprise. Maybe that is why many valentines were secretly delivered.

How to buy art for a gift

February is a great month to buy art as a gift. The key is to know the giftee’s desired artist or artworks. We have several art venues in town and local artworks online, too, so that could have art inspirations worth pursuing. The secret to success is to go together with the giftee and visit the art in person. Or together check out the online offerings, which most artists have today. Ask in-

sightful questions such as, “Do you know of an artist or artwork that would be nice to have?” Or “I’m thinking of getting a painting or a sculpture, what do you think is a good idea?” Or “Let’s go art shopping, I need your input.” That would optimize success to please the intended.

Artful Valentine cards

Valentines aren’t just for sweethearts. They are thoughtful, warmhearted reminders of affection and caring, especially in the cold of February. Artist-made valentine cards are always unique and will likely become a keepsake memory for a long time. The earliest surviving card was written in prison, from Frenchman Charles the Duke of Orleans. Imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1415. He wrote the following to his wife: “Je suis desja d’amour tanné Ma tres doulce Valentinée.” Which translates to: “I am already scorched (literally “tanned”) of love, my very gentle Valentine.”

In the 1600s, Shakespeare wrote, “To-morrow is Saint Valentine’s day, all in the morning

betime, and I a maid at your window, to be your Valentine.” York Castle Museum has a valentine exhibit called “The fate of flirts” spanning 200 years, and a pre-printed one from 1797 decorated with Cupid and flowers and the verse around the borders read: "Since on this ever Happy day, All Nature’s full of Love and Play, yet harmless still if my design, ’Tis but to be your Valentine."

In Georgian times, exchanging Valentine cards had become quite normal, and the practice really took off in Victorian times in England, as the penny post launched in 1840. Even then, not every Valentine card held sugary words, and to this day, kids of all ages send greetings of jest, fun, and frivolity amid the romantic efforts of some.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, teacher, and public speaker who enjoys realizing her imagination into making artful things. Happy to share her art and artful ideas, she can be reached at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic, Jan. 6



Above: The Annual Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic took place on Jan. 6 on a frozen Palmer Lake. Lewis-Palmer, Pine Creek, Cheyenne Mountain, and Chaparral high schools competed in the event. Chaparral’s Wolverines defeated Cheyenne Mountain 4-3 and then beat the Lewis-Palmer Rangers (pictured at left) 5-4 to win the Classic. *Photos by Creighton Smith.*

John Howe at Silver Key, Jan. 9



Above: The Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center, 66 Jefferson St., Monument, hosted a presentation by John Howe on interpersonal communication titled “I’m talking, are you listening?” on Jan. 9. Howe is a local community leader with college-level presentation skills. In addition to its usual services, Silver Key at Tri-Lakes occasionally sponsors events and presentations like this. Please check the Silver Key website, <https://www.silverkey.org/tri-lakes-events/> for scheduled events and activities. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Waters: Young Marine of the Year



Right: Jackson Waters, 16, of Monument was named Division 4 Young Marine of the Year. Jackson will now compete with five other finalists for the highest honor, National Young Marine of the Year. Previously, Waters was named Unit Young Marine of the Year and earned two Gold Presidential Service Awards. He’s also a public affairs correspondent for the Young Marines program. The Young Marines is a national nonprofit youth education and service program for boys and girls age 8 through high school graduation. The program focuses on teaching the values of leadership, teamwork, and self-discipline. *Photo courtesy of the Young Marines.*

Author Kevin Anderson at TLCA, Jan. 14



Above and right: International best-selling author Kevin J. Anderson held a book-signing and lecture on Jan. 14 at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA). Anderson has published over 175 books with 24 million copies in print in 35 languages. Anderson and his wife, Rebecca, are residents of Monument. He described his journey from a small town in Wisconsin where he made regular visits to the



“bookmobile” to satiate his thirst for reading, especially science fiction, and later his study of astrophysics augmented his creativity in writing science fiction. He contributed to many Star Wars and other sci-fi odysseys. He signed copies of his books before and after his presentation, and part of the proceeds of book sales went to TLCA. *Photos by Steve Pate.*

Gary Weston's science fiction art at TLCA, Jan. 14



Above, center, and right: In conjunction with Kevin J. Anderson’s book-signing and presentation at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts on Jan. 14, Gary Weston displayed many of his science fiction-oriented creations made from readily available

items. Examples include Voltron the Invincible, Altoid Radiocon Robot, and Nemo’s Robotic Submarine. *Photos by Steve Pate.*

Kim Richey at TLCA, Jan. 21



Left: An enthusiastic audience greeted Grammy-nominated Kim Richey to the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) stage on Jan. 21. She said, “Connecting with the audience, the back and forth is what makes performing and the audience experience special.” And connect she did during her two-set concert with songs that stretched the breadth of her nearly 30-year music career. Richey introduced each song with a little bit of background starting with her eight-hour journey from Durango over Wolf Pass to reach Colorado Springs. She related how she finds inspiration for each song, from a snowy walk on a London evening, to an Ian Fleming quote about villains, to a one liner from the TV show Hill Street Blues. Beginning with *Every River*, Richey tapped into all her albums with songs such as *Chinese Box*, *Come Around*, *Pin A Rose*, *London Town*, and *Chase Wild Horses*. *Photo by David Futey.*

New wells coming to Monument



Above and right: The Town of Monument will be drilling three new wells. The site for Well 11 (seen in left and top right photos) is in the open space west of Park Trail Drive near Blizzard Valley Trail. A sound barrier has been built around it to protect neighbors from the noise of 24-hour drilling. Well 12 (bottom right photo) will be off Mitchell and Santa Fe Avenues, and Well 13 will be near Santa Fe Trail and Fourth Street. The town estimates the drilling will take about three weeks to complete. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*

Why advertise in OCN?

- OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. We mail more than 22,000 copies every month and put another 600 copies in stacks throughout the area. OCN has the largest mailed circulation and the third-largest circulation among local newspapers in El Paso County after The Gazette and The Colorado Springs Independent. We put copies of OCN into the hands of those people most likely to buy your products or services: local residents and businesses.
- OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news. Since its founding in 2001, OCN has been presenting unbiased, detailed coverage of Tri-Lakes area governmental entities and their deliberations and actions. Credibility is key. Advertising in a credible medium typically rubs off on the advertisers in that media.
- OCN gives preference to Tri-Lakes area businesses. As part of OCN's long-standing commitment to encouraging the economic health of the Tri-Lakes area, we offer a significantly discounted ad rate to Tri-Lakes area businesses as a way to help local businesses like yours succeed.
- OCN's low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget. OCN has one of the lowest ad costs per printed copy of any local publication. Since OCN is a monthly publication, your ad is out there for a month—more than four times longer than other local papers. Many of our advertisers tell us they're still getting calls in the third and fourth week of the month.
- OCN doesn't use contracts. You aren't tied down. Adjust your advertising month-to-month to meet your changing needs. Our advertisers run ads in *OCN* because they see benefit in it, not because they're bound by a contract they signed months before. To reward frequent advertisers, OCN has a Frequent Advertiser Bonus (FAB) rewards program. You earn up to 10% of your ad cost as a reward you can use to reduce the cost of future OCN advertising. The more you advertise with OCN, the more you save. Thanks to our FAB rewards program, OCN advertisers have saved more than \$105,000!
- You are supporting a good thing. Your advertising dollars support a unique all-volunteer, Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and businesses.

And the best reason of all: It works!

Crystal Wright, Crystal's In-Home Training - "I have had the best success with advertising in the Our Community News for my business. 95% of my new clients are coming from this local paper, and I couldn't be more pleased. If you are thinking of advertising in the Monument area, I recommend you advertise with this paper."

Mike Smith, Woodsmith Custom Creations - "OCN is the only paper that works for me. I've tried other newspapers, one that comes out daily and another that comes out weekly. Compared to the results I get from advertising in the OCN the other papers are flops. I get a fairly priced ad in my targeted area with calls referencing my ad every month. It can't be beat!"

Randi and Dale Sehestedt, Woodmoor Handyman and Snow Plowing - "OCN is the only paper we advertise in and it consistently brings us plenty of good local customers. Great paper and great people to work with."

Mary Sue Hafey, Fringe Benefits Custom Interiors - "Since I starting advertising with OCN years ago, it has helped brand my company while consistently increasing my exposure and sales!"

Elba D'Asaro, Spa Medica - "OCN ads work!"

Mike Reaster, Guitar Lessons - "Ads in OCN work great for me. I tried other local papers and got no response. Thanks to my ads in OCN, I can work from home and make a decent living. All my work comes from my ads in OCN."

For more information on advertising, go to www.ocn.me/advertise.htm or contact John Heiser at (719) 488-3455 or ads@ocn.me.

An important message for our readers OCN needs your help!

Our Community News is an all-volunteer organization. For the past 20 years, our volunteers have provided unbiased reporting on important local issues, including real estate development, fire departments, school districts, and water availability. We have provided a very favorable platform for advertising local businesses. We have published letters to the editor to allow you to express your opinions on events affecting the Tri-Lakes area.

Now we find that we have more tasks than we have volunteers. Some vital jobs where we could use your help:

- Reporters. Reporting on local meetings, what they talked about and what they decided.
- Mailing assistants. Counting and lifting tubs of papers to take the monthly mailing to the post offices and stacks of papers to local businesses, loading and unloading mailing tubs from a truck at two locations, preparing postof-

fice paperwork, tub labels, subscription labels, etc.

- Drivers. Driving a rental truck to various post offices once a month.
- Ad sales assistants. We need volunteers who love *OCN* to contact local businesses and encourage them to advertise in *OCN*.

The time and skills involved vary greatly from job to job. OCN will provide whatever equipment and training you need.

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information.

Please call Publisher John Heiser at (719) 488-3455, or email johnheiser@ocn.me to see how you can contribute. Contact John today! He is waiting to hear from you. Together we can ensure that OCN continues to provide a vital service to our wonderful Tri-Lakes community.

Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event. Please notify us if your event listing needs to be updated.

D38 Talent Show

District 38 Schools and Monument Hill Kiwanis Club are teaming up to hold a performing arts talent show for students in D38 or living in the D38 boundary. Students wishing to compete must submit an application (available online at monumenthillkiwanis.org as are contest rules and critical dates) by Sat., **Feb. 11**. Auditions will be held Sat., **Feb. 25**.

Start and end times for D-20

New school start and end times were announced for D-20 for their 2023-24 school year. The new times are as follows: Elementary School: 7:30 am-2:30 pm; Middle School 8:50 am-3:55 pm (CMS: 8:20 am-3:25 pm); High School 8:10 am-3:15 pm. See www.asd20.org/announcements/new-startend-times-for-202324-school-year-2023-01-24/.

D38 free and reduced price school meals policy

Applications for free and reduced price school meals, instructions and an information letter to households are available at each school or online at www.lewisipalmer.org/nutritional services.

Drop the Distracted Driving

Colorado has a law that bans texting while driving for drivers of all ages. CDOT found that most people have a "Do Not Disturb While Driving" feature on their phone in a recent survey, but many don't know how to use it. The unexpected can happen in an instant. Be proactive, learn how to enable this feature see DropTheDistraction at distracted.codot.gov.

Colorado Auto Safety and Traction Law

During winter storms, or when conditions require, CDOT will implement the Passenger Vehicle Traction Law. CDOT can implement the Passenger Vehicle Traction and Chain Laws on any state highway; the law requires specific tire tread depths, chains (or an approved

alternative traction device such as Tire Socks). See <https://www.codot.gov/travel/winter-driving/tractionlaw>.

Winter Car Safety per CDOT

Make sure all vehicle systems are in safe operating condition. Even locally, include: sturdy scraper/snow-brush, snow shovel, sand for traction, flashlight, tow strap, jumper cables or battery jump starter device, extra batteries, multi-tool (leatherman type), blanket or sleeping bag, gallon jug of water, first aid and essential medications, flares/reflectors to signal for help and warn other motorists, battery or crank-powered radio for emergency broadcasts. Checklist: <https://www.codot.gov/travel/winter-driving/winter-preparedness>.

The safety stop is now state law

Bicyclists in Colorado now have safe and legal options for navigating through intersections after governor Jared Polis signed Colorado house bill 22-1028 into law on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. The new law, which allows bicyclists and users of low-speed conveyances to treat stop signs as yield signs and stop lights as stop signs when they already have the right of way, goes into effect immediately statewide. Info: bikecoloradosprings.org.

Neighborhood safety

What qualifies as suspicious activity? "If you see something, say something." It's vital to report to local law enforcement. Suspicious activity can refer to any incident, event, individual or activity that seems unusual or out of place. Some common examples of suspicious activities include: A stranger loitering in your neighborhood or a vehicle cruising the streets repeatedly. Someone peering into cars or windows. Here's what local authorities and Colorado Department of Public Safety says is needed information: Who did you see; what did you see; when did you see it; where did you see it; why it is suspicious. Call 911 or your local law enforcement agency.

Seniors Driver's License Electronic Renewal

With the implementation of the Driver's License Electronic Renewal By Seniors Act (HB21-1139), Colorado seniors now have the permanent ability to renew their driver license or identification card online, but there are new

laws to understand. Information is online via mycolorado.state.us. Some restrictions apply to drivers aged 21-80, and drivers over 80 need a special doctor's statement. Coloradans who are concerned about an elder family member's ability to drive should email dor_mvhelpdesk@state.co.us.

DMV online and kiosks

Clerk & Recorder's Office provides motor vehicle and driver's license services. 30+ services at mydmv.colorado.gov. Renew registration online or at a kiosk. Make appointments. check in for appointments and wait where it's convenient for you. The DMV encourages Coloradans to skip the trip and use its online services whenever possible. So before your next trip to the DMV, remember to save time, go online. Visit DMV.Colorado.gov/Save-time for more information. See epcdrives.com.

MVEA offers rebates

For information on MVEA's energy efficiency rebates, visit www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money/rebates/, or call 800-388-9881.

Free search for Unclaimed Property

Unclaimed property is tangible or intangible property that has had no activity for a specific period of time. Once the property is in the custody of the state of Colorado, the State will maintain custody of the property in perpetuity until the rightful owner or heirs come forward to claim. The State Treasurer's Office provides this service free of charge. Colorado: Great Colorado Payback - Colorado.gov (findyourunclaimedproperty.com) SAME AS: <https://colorado.findyourunclaimedproperty.com/app/what-is-ucp>

The Sunflower is for people with non-visible disabilities



Watch for green and yellow sunflower lanyards, bracelets, and ribbons, discreet ways to make the invisible visible. Wearing the Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around the wearer including staff, colleagues and health professionals that they need additional support, help or a little more time. However big or small, your help moves us closer to a society where people recognize that an offer of help, understanding

and kindness can make a huge difference to the daily experiences that a Sunflower wearer has.

Tri-Lakes Cares Needs Your Support

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization located in and serving northern El Paso County through emergency relief and self-sufficiency programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to donate. Visit <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate> to find out how to donate money, medical items, personal supplies, or food. Please check the web for current needs in our food pantry at <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate/current-needs>. Donation drop-off hours are Monday thru Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Nicole Pettigrew, Director of Client Programs, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111.

Free services for seniors

Mountain Community Senior Services offers free transportation and handyman services to Tri-Lakes seniors. Private transportation to medical appointments or a grocery store is now provided by Envida, 719-633-4677. If you need grab bars in the bathroom, a ramp to your door, or repair of stairs or railings, please call 719-488-0076, and leave a message or visit www.coloradoseniorhelp.com.

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

Each monthly Senior Beat newsletter is full of information for local seniors, including the daily menu of the senior lunches offered Monday through Friday at the Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. It also contains the schedule of the classes and events for the month at the Senior Citizens Center and senior-friendly library programs. To subscribe, send an email with your name and mailing address to SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org. Senior Beat can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.org.

Can you volunteer today?

- OCN needs your help. See article on page 28.
- Links to local organizations with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county's website, www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).
- The Colorado State University Extension office

in El Paso County has several opportunities for individuals interested in volunteering. <https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/>

- Committed to building healthy, caring communities, these El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Reach out today and find out how you can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! <https://www.americantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/>.
- The El Paso County Sheriff's Office Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. <https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/volunteer-program-0>.
- The El Paso County Volunteer Program is a wonderful opportunity for citizens to learn about the various functions of county government as well as give back to the community. The County's numerous boards and commissions need your experience, talents and time. <https://bocc.elpasoco.com/volunteer>.
- The El Paso County Fair started as a potato festival in 1905 and has grown into so much more. We will be celebrating our 117th Fair, July 16th -23rd! <https://www.elpasocountyfair.com/p/getinvolved/volunteer-opportunities>
- The Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit whose mission is to support Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers. The organization is comprised of an executive board of elected officers and a general membership governed by official Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation as a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization. <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/nature-centers/nature-center-volunteers/>
- Children's Literacy Center provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level! Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 p.m., and our Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or email Christine Jeffson at Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org.

Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event. Please contact calendar@ocn.me with changes and additions.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board meeting.** Typically meets quarterly on the first **Mon.**, 4 pm Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., Feb. 2 & 16,** 9 am, Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planning-development.elpasoco.com>.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting,** usually every **Tue.**, 9 am. **There is no meeting on Feb. 14.** BOCC land use meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday of the month as needed at 1 pm. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-6430.
- **Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., Feb. 6,** 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.

- **Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., Feb. 7,** 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues., as needed.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee** (formerly DAAC), **Tue. Feb. 7,** 6-8 p.m. Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, 1315 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. For further information tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Feb. 7,** 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Feb. 8,** 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- **Monument Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Feb. 8,** 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- **Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Feb. 9,** 23, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Monument Academy School Board meeting, Thu., Feb. 9,** 6 pm at the East Campus. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Meets second Thu. Info 719-481-1950, <https://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/>.
- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Feb. 13,** 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon.

Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.

- **El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting, Tue., Feb. 16,** 9 am Monument Town Hall Boardroom, 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-3603. loopwater.org.
- **Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Feb. 15,** 9 a.m., 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, www.colorado.gov/msd.
- **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Feb. 15,** 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Feb 15,** 6 pm. Usually meets

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- third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PACujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting**, in person or via Zoom, Wed., **Feb. 15**, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
 - **Triview Metropolitan District board meeting**, Thu., **Feb. 16**, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
 - **Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Thu., **Feb. 16**, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets fourth Wed., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
 - **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 21**, 6-10 pm, (closed for President's Day holiday). Normally meets third Mon. This meeting of the Board of Education will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPS-DCommunity, agenda, supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
 - **Monument Town Council meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 21**, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
 - **Woodmoor Improvement Association Annual Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 22**, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Sign-in begins at 6:30 pm. The WIA Board normally meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
 - **Monument Fire District board meeting**, in person or via Zoom, Wed., **Feb. 22**, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org>, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday.
 - **Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meeting**, meets in person or via Zoom, every other month. Next meeting: Wed., **Mar. 22**, 4:30 pm, Monument Fire District Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. Usually meets the fourth Wed. every other month, precedes the MFD board meeting. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY
EVENTS

- **Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting**, Sat., **Mar. 11**, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Members of local HOAs welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly second Sat. of the month. www.nepco.org.
- **The Centering Prayer Group at Black Forest Community Church**, first Sat., 8:30-10 am The Old Log Church. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all. Contact Rev. Roger Butts, 719-433-3135, for information.
- **Half Day Prayer Group at Benet Hill Monastery**, first Sat., 9 am-12 pm. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting**, every Sat., 8 am. www.MHKiwanis.org, Monument-HillKiwanis@gmail.com for details, guests are welcome. service leadership clubs, Key clubs, Builders Club and K-kids at D38 schools. Empty bowls dinner and silent auction Oct. 12. Memberships open to the public. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Neighborhood Net Ham Radio**, every Sat., 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neigh-

- bors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- **The Wine Seller Free Wine Tastings**, every Sat., 1-4 pm, 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, www.thewineseller.net.
 - **Palmer Lake Art Group**, second Sat. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
 - **Lions Club Bingo**, every Sat. (except the first Sat.), 8:30 am-1 pm and first Mon., 5:30-10 pm Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group**, third Sat., 10 am-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485. If you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.
 - **Benet Hill Monastery**, Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come up and visit prayer sites, every Sun. worship is 10:15 a.m., 3190 Benet Lane, 80921. See ad on page 3.
 - **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church**, every Sun., 8 and 11 am traditional, 9:30 am contemporary. Both in-person (no registration necessary) and live stream at www.tlumc.org/live. Watch live or replay: www.facebook.com/tlumc, www.youtube.com/tlumc.org. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.
 - **Fuel Church** Sunday Service, every Sun. Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at www.fuelchurch.org at 11:40 am on www.fuelchurch.org. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us info@fuel.org. See ad on page 5.
 - **Ridgeview Baptist Church**, every Sun., 10:30 am, temporarily meeting at 9130 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, 80920. Info: 719-357-6515 or www.ridgeviewcolorado.org. See ad on page 6.
 - **German Conversation Group**, every Mon., 1:30pm, Monument Library, 1706 Woodmoor Drive. Public welcome with Intermediate to Advanced German speaking skills.
 - **The Forest Chorus**, first and third Mon., 7-8:30 p.m., at the Black Forest Community Center. most months. The group supports community events, leading sing-along audience participation, and occasionally perform a wide variety of music for fun. For more information please email: blackforestnews@earthlink.net. Previous choir or barbershop experience is preferred.
 - **Women's A.A. Step Study**, every Mon., 6:30 pm, meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 866-641-9190.Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9:00 - 10:00 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309
 - **Al-Anon Zoom Meeting**, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309.
 - **Monument Life Recovery Group**, every Mon., 6:30-7:30 pm, The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Daycare provided for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
 - **Amateur ham radio W0TLM** (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third Mon. All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: www.W0TLM.com
 - **La Leche League breastfeeding support group**, second Mon., 7 pm, . Partners and helpers welcome (and babies and kids, too) so we can meet our breastfeeding goals together. Black Forest Community Center 12530 Black Forest Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80908. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.com.
 - **Children's Literacy Center**, every Mon. & Wed., 5:30-6:30 pm. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St. Monument. For more information, to become

- a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell).
- **Centering Prayer Group at Benet Hill Monastery**, every Tue., 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org.
 - **Essentrics Fitness Program** at Senior Center, every Tue., 9 am & Thu., 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, www.trilakeseniors.org.
 - **GriefShare Support Group**, last Tue. of the month, 10:30 am-noon. NEW LOCATION: Tri-Lakes Senior Center, 66 Jefferson St. in the Grace Best Elementary School building. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP, info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
 - **Senior Citizen Lunches**, Connections Café sites, every Wed. will have "grab and go" (prepared meals). A \$2.25 donation is requested. Call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument. Food Pantry offers a "pick up only" Mon.-Fri., noon-12:30 pm, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Reservations requested: 719-884 2300. Check the Silver Key @ Tri-Lakes website for events and schedules, <https://www.silverkey.org/tri-lakes-events/>
 - **Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club**, third Wed. Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.cspguild.org.
 - **Gleneagle Sertoma**, first and third Wed., 11:45 am to 1 pm at Beasts and Brews, 7 Spectrum Loop, Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220.
 - **Senior Social**, fourth Wed., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
 - **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ** Wednesday night fellowship classes, every Wed., 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Cruisers**, first Wed., 7 pm. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: <https://tl-cruisers.weebly.com>.
 - **AARP Black Forest #1100**, second Wed., noon. All ages welcome. In-person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
 - **Senior Bingo**, third Wed. Silver Alliance Senior Center, Space is limited to 16 participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
 - **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829**, third Wed., 7 pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POC Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
 - **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829**, third Wed., 7 pm, The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
 - **Pikes Peak Genealogical Society**, Wed., **Feb. 8**, 6:30pm Zoom hangout, 7 pm start; second Wed., guests welcome. Usually meets at The Venue, Library 21c 1175 Chapel Hills Drive Colorado Springs (currently only Zoom). Info:ppgsPresident@ppgs.com.
 - **Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity AFG**, every Thu., 7-8 pm, Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: MonumentSerenity@gmail.com.
 - **Palmer Divide Quiltmakers**, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
 - **Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go**, every Thu., 9-10:15 am at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek

- Rd., Monument. For additional information go to www.al-anon-co.org.
- **Networking breakfast**, first and third **Thu.**, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
 - **Fuel Church Griefshare**, every **Thu.**, 5:30-7:30 pm 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email info@fuel.org. 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake.
 - **A.A. Big Book Study**, every **Thu.**, 7 pm, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
 - **Palmer Lake Historical Society**, **Thu.**, **Feb. 16**, 6:00- 8:00 pm. Usually meets third **Thu.**, meeting 7:30pm. Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St.
 - **Friends of Fox Run Park**, fourth **Thu.** Zoom meeting, 7 pm, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com, they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for forest safety, trails, trees, education, more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
 - **Tri-Lakes Women's Club** (TLWC) monthly meeting: **Fri.**, **Feb. 17**, 11 am, Falcon Club, USAFA. Program: Katie and Joe Uveges, father-daughter Singer/songwriter local duo with a focus on folk/country/bluegrass. Third **Fri.** Meetings open to TLWC members. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at www.tlwc.net. Contact Info: Tri-Lakes Women's Club membership@tlwc.net
 - **Senior Book Club**, second **Fri.**, 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
 - **Gleneagle Women's Club**, membership luncheon, third **Fri.**, Sept-June, various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Amy Miller, (310) 941-1590.
 - **Monument Dementia Caregiver Support Group**, Second **Sat.**, 9:45-11:15 am. Meets in Person, First National Bank Monument (581 Highway 105, Monument, CO 80132). Meets monthly, 2nd Sat. Contact: Registration is required, call 800-272-3900 or email khare@alz.org to register.
 - **Tri-Lakes Monument radio Association**, Details: Contact Bob Witte, 719-659-3727.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mailing day**, **Thu.**, **Mar. 2**; approx. 9 am-2 pm. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me to sign up and get the address and exact times.
- **Winter Fun at Fox Run**, **Sat.**, **Feb. 4**, 10 am-2 pm, celebrate winter's beauty: roast hot dogs and marshmallows, live music, wagon hayrides, storytelling, dog costume contest and parade with prizes for the winners, games, and more. Fox Run Regional Park, \$5/person includes food and all activities. Prepaid registration at www.elpasocountynaturecenters.com. All proceeds support a new nature center in Fox Run Regional Park.
- **Palmer Lake business workshop series**, **Thu.**, **Feb. 9**, Social Media Workshop, coffee and a light breakfast for attendees. \$17/person. Register now: info@palmerlakecolorado.org. Palmer Lake Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent, Palmer Lake.
- **Free chess tournament**, all k-12 students in Lewis-Palmer School District #38 area, **Sat. Feb. 11**, 2023, Bear Creek Elementary School (a new location). Reg. begins 8:15 a.m., First Round 9:00 a.m. Please arrive by 8:40 a.m. Play is 4 rounds, Tournament should be over by 2:00 p.m. Pre-registration is encouraged so we can order sufficient trophies and medals for all participants. Pre-register each student at: shorturl.at/mWX36. Chess sets will be provided. Children should bring their own snacks. Event is selling

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Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information. Please call John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455, or email johnheiser@ocn.me to see how you can contribute. Contact us today!

- pizza and sodas as a fundraiser. Contact Steve Waldmann, the Tournament Director and Bear Creek Elementary Chess Club Coach at husk-erco@gmail.com. If you know of an adult who would like to be one of our Tournament Referees, contact Steve Waldmann.
- **D38 Talent Show application due date**, **Sat.**, **Feb. 11**, auditions **Sat.**, **Feb. 25**. Info: monument-hillkiwanis.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Networking**, **Tue.**, **Feb. 14**, 5 pm-7:00 pm, members free, \$15 for non-members. Details: www.trilakeschamber.com. 719-481-3282.
 - **Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassador Program**: 2023 Kick-off Meeting. **Tues.**, **Feb. 21**, 7 - 8:30 p.m., learn to reduce wildland fire risk, earn a free wood chipper rental for your neighborhood. TLUMC EPG offering a FREE course (on Zoom) to share information to organize neighbors and implement wildfire risk reduction projects in your own neighborhood. See Eventbrite.com, search “wildfire neighborhood ambassador” for more info and to sign up, or write to Andre’ at epg@tlumc.org.
 - **Black Forest Saddle Club: awards ceremony for top equestrians for 2022 show season**, **Sat.**, **Feb. 25**, 3 pm, includes officer elections. Refreshments provided. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Contact styfree451@gmail.com or visit BlackForestSaddleClub.com.
 - **Affordable Flooring Connection**, special offers through **Feb. 28**. see ad on page 2.
 - **Cornerstone Cleaners**, special offers through **Feb. 28**. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
 - **Eagle Wine & Spirits**, special offers through **Feb. 28**. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
 - **MVEA board nominations** by committee due **Thu.**, **Mar. 16** and petition due **Apr. 6**. See ad on page 9.
 - **Monument Cleaners**, special offers through **Feb. 28**, 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
 - **Monumental Med Spa**, special offers through **Feb. 28** at the loft, 4 Hwy. 105 Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
 - **Noel Relief Centers**, new patient special. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
 - **Pikes Peak Brewing Co.**, pop up smokehouse **Fri. & Sat.**, 1756 Lake Woodmoor Dr. See ad on page 13.
 - **Tri-lakes Collision**, special offers through **Feb. 28**. See ad on page 5.
 - **The Living Room Plants**, special offers through **Feb. 28**. 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
 - **McCord's Garden center opens**, **Wed.**, **Mar. 1**, Book projects before Mar. 1 for a special offer. 2720 McShane Dr, Monument,(Corner of Hwy 105 & McShane Dr.) See ad on page 4.

Content

Articles in Our Community News focus on the deliberations of Tri-Lakes area governmental bodies such as the Monument Board of Trustees, Palmer Lake Town Council, and many of the local water, sanitation, fire, and school district boards.

Unlike papers that try to figure out what the “story” is and then get quotes on each side to presumably lead the reader to conclude what the “truth” is, OCN’s role is to report in detail on public meetings of local governmental entities. We report what was talked about and what was decided. By reading OCN, you can find out what you might have learned if you had attended those public meetings. In this context, “truth” is that the articles accurately represent what transpired at the meetings.

The content of ads, inserts, and letters to the editor in OCN is solely the responsibility of the advertisers and authors who place those ads, inserts, and letters. The appearance of an ad, insert, or letter in OCN does not imply endorsement of the ad, insert, or letter’s content or purpose. While OCN does not knowingly run false ads, inserts, or letters, we do not research the accuracy of that content. Readers are encouraged to do their own research prior to committing to use the products or services offered or accept the conclusions of letters to the editor. Readers with concerns about the content of an ad, insert, or letter should take up those concerns with the advertiser or author.

Contact John Heiser, Publisher, at johnheiser@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

- **YMCA youth sports registration**: Flag Football, Volleyball & Soccer Season starts **Apr. 3**. Info: ppymca.org/sports. See ad on page 6.

Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please call (719) 339-7831 or send the information to calendar@ocn.me or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

Letters to Our Community

Our Community News welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest to readers in the Tri-Lakes area. We do not knowingly print letters that are substantially the same as letters that have been submitted to other publications. To ensure that OCN contains a variety of viewpoints, each letter writer is limited to a maximum of one (1) letter per issue and six (6) letters within a twelve (12) month period. To submit a letter, please:

- Email your letter, preferably as an attached Microsoft Word document, to editor@ocn.me or mail a copy to **Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742**.
- Identify your submission as a letter to the editor and confirm that it has not been submitted to any other publication.
- Include a suggested headline or title that summarizes the topic you are addressing.
- Limit your letter to no more than 300 words including your suggested headline and closing.
- Include your full name, home address, phone numbers, and email address, if you have one. Only your name will be published.
- Submit your letter so we receive it no later than midnight, Friday, two weeks prior to the publication date.

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455 or editor@ocn.me. At OCN's sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. OCN does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. The number of letters printed on a particular topic or in a particular issue may be limited. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

Look for our next issue
Saturday, Mar. 4

Ad space reservations due: Fri., Feb. 10
Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Feb. 17
Letters to the editor due: Fri., Feb. 17
Calendar items due: Fri., Feb. 24

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at **WWW.OCN.ME**



Our Community News

Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area

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Event information: calendar@ocn.me

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