

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, April 27

Strategies for water and drainage take shape

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) held a workshop to discuss water rates before opening its regular meeting on April 27. At the board meeting following the workshop, it voted on a resolution to formally accept a preliminary engineering report on the town's water system. The board continued its discussion of how to handle stormwater drainage, and then took up the issue of security at the Elephant Rock property.

The board voted on a resolution that would authorize the acceptance of funds for the Main Street Design project. Finally, resident Marty Brodzik used the public comment period to ask questions about the town's budget.

Rates analyst presents draft

At the workshop meeting, Chris Brandewie, of Water Rates by Brandewie, told the board he does water rate studies for smaller communities, many of which have never had a formal rate study done.

The first part of his presentation focused on the variables that need to be factored into a rates analysis. He stressed the benefits of a capital asset plan and a focus on being proactive not reactive. Potential funders like to see precise asset inventories in place, and asset inventories can help educate the public. Brandewie said he had worked with staff on Palmer Lake's asset inventory and had access to information collected by GMS Engineers Inc., the town's consulting engineers. The town has renewable surface water and ground water, he said, so supply is resilient. These assets formed the basis of his funding plan, he said.

Brandewie said assets that have a high risk of failure and high consequences of failure should be fixed first. Assets with a low risk of failure and low consequences should be monitored.

He mentioned three funding models: pay as you go, save money in advance of need, and seek grants.

Brandewie pointed out that the town's reservoirs would fill in eventually and its long-term planning would need to accommodate that.

Mayor Glant Havenar raised the issue of how long the planning window should be—she pointed out that the town could grow 30% by 2045. She questioned whether it was fair to ask today's ratepayers to fund repairs that might be decades away. She suggested a 25-year planning window.

Brandewie asked the board for direction on its priorities for capital improvement, which would help him determine how many dollars the town should be putting into reserve each year. He estimated that it would require \$570,000 going into reserves each year to fund the replacement of the existing infrastructure. He said he realized that was not realistic.

In response to a question from the audience, Brandewie said the town had \$600,000 in its Water Enterprise Fund and \$132,000 for capital improvements.

Trustee Kevin Dreher asked Brandewie if he thought the town could raise money by selling water rights. Brandewie replied that his assumption was the town did not have enough water.

Havenar said she wanted to balance the town's water fund, plan for the future, and determine a rate increase that would cover future needs.

Materials in the packet mentioned a new water meter system from Mountain States Pipe and Supply that will improve meter reading capabilities. When combined with the town's meter analytic software, the meters would provide alerts, a customer portal, and other features.

Following the discussion, the board agreed to

continue their planning at a workshop at 5 p.m. on May 3.

Preliminary report on water system accepted

The board voted to approve Resolution 35-2023, which formally accepts a preliminary engineering report on improvements needed to the town's water system that was written by GMS Inc. in 2022 but never officially accepted by the previous board.

The report recommends many improvements, organized into three priorities:

Priority 1

- A new Arapahoe formation well.
- Groundwater treatment plant improvements.
- Distribution system pipeline replacements on Park Street, Upper Glenway Street, Glenway Street, Valley Crescent Street, Shady Lane, and Hilltop Road.
- Total preliminary project cost estimate for Priority 1: \$4.75 million.

Priority 2

- Distribution system looping redesign on County Line Road, Shady Lane, and Red Rocks Ranch Drive.
- Total preliminary project cost estimate for Priority 2: \$1.26 million.

Priority 3

- Distribution system extension to serve properties on private wells.
- Total preliminary project cost estimate for Priority 3: \$4.07 million.

The complete water system improvement report can be found on the town's webpage here: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/water/page/water-system-studiesreports>.

Stormwater strategy debated

The board returned to its discussion of how to manage stormwater drainage that it began at its April 13 meeting.

In May 2022, GMS prepared a report for the town that laid out three designs for a way to prevent flooding by building a system for stormwater that would keep it out of streets and gutters. The report proposed three alternative designs:

- An above-ground design that would handle a 10-year flood and cost \$400,000.
- An underground system that would handle a 100-year flood and cost \$2.08 million.
- A hybrid system, with portions above and below ground, that would cost \$885,000.

Mark Morton, representing GMS, told the board it would need to decide which alternative it wanted to pursue before searching for funding. He recommended establishing a stormwater enterprise fund as a next step. He pointed out that a properly managed discharge of stormwater was required by law, and the town could be fined if it does not comply with regulations.

Residents Roger Mosely and Marty Brodzik both argued against creating a stormwater enterprise fund.

The stormwater drainage report can be found here: https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/public_works/page/6245/master_drainage_plan_report.pdf.

The board decided to add the drainage discussion to the workshop scheduled for May 3.

Security concerns at Elephant Rock property

Havenar told the board security issues at the Elephant Rock property needed to be addressed. The Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency (CIRSA),

which insures the town, had concerns about the property, she said. Town Administrator Dawn Collins added that CIRSA had recommended that doors and windows be secured and "No Trespassing" signs be posted. She said she had requests to tour the buildings, so a security plan had to account for that access. Collins asked the board for suggestions on how they would like to improve security.

Havenar asked what would be required to be able to leave the gate to the property open. Collins said that would require grading a parking area and removing hazards. Dreher said he believed \$5,000 was budgeted for securing the property and Collins confirmed. Trustee Dennis Stern said he was not comfortable spending \$5,000 on something the town would be getting rid of.

Collins raised the issue of liability should someone be injured in one of the buildings.

Lindsay Willan, who with Richard Willan are working on a plan to use a portion of the property for a spa, said she believed other entities are interested in the property and have made offers. She asked if the board was waiting for a master plan before deciding on leasing any other the buildings. She said a decision on leases would make the issue of security moot. Ball said she would like to see all the offers and discuss them.

The discussion ended without a clear decision.

Main Street redesign funding

Collins told the board that a discussion about how to improve safety issues on Main Street, such as changes to parking and a crosswalk at Pie Corner, had led to a grant of \$150,000 from the Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Fund (MMOF) for the design of the improvements. Resolution 34-2023 authorizes an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Colorado Department of Transportation so that the town can accept the funds. The board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution.

Questions at public comments

Resident Brodzik asked the following questions during public comments:

- Why is the 2023 Grant Fund monthly report the only fund that doesn't show funds available beginning of year and end of year?
- Why does the 2023 Grant Fund monthly report not reflect the Water Department's budgeted expenditure of \$259,000 for American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds?
- How is the Water Enterprise going to cover the budgeted \$155,000 shortfall for operations and maintenance?
- Where is the Water Enterprise Fund's restricted capital monies, remaining actual \$368,000 from 2022, and budgeted 2023 of \$155,000?
- Where is the missing actual 2022 \$127,000 of ARPA monies in the Grant Fund?
- Why doesn't the Grant Fund show the actual 2022 \$127,000 of ARPA monies as "infrastructure restricted"?

The next board meetings are scheduled for May 12 and 26. 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.

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Woodmoor Improvement Association, April 26

Board considers common area concerns

By Jackie Burhans

At its April meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board considered parking and rodent concerns at its newest common area as well as a request to purchase a portion of one of its common areas. The board heard about leveraging a county portal to report on roadwork needs and other operational reports.

Concerns at The Preserve

President Brian Bush noted that a resident had brought up a concern about people parking on the roads near the newest common area known as The Preserve in South Woodmoor to access its trails. Bush

noted that all roads in Woodmoor are under the authority of El Paso County rather than WIA. He also reiterated that WIA, as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization, has no authority to restrict public access to the common areas in Woodmoor. Finally, he noted that WIA had just taken ownership of The Preserve land recently and would keep an eye on the parking situation but felt it was too early to decide on any course of action.

Similarly, he brought up a concern about prairie dog activity in The Preserve area, some of which may be caused by the increased construction in the Clover Leaf, Monument Junction, and Home Place Ranch

developments. He felt it was too early to address this issue as well.

Bush asked for and received the board's unanimous consent and ratification of this position.

Request to purchase part of common area

Bush said a resident had approached WIA with a request to purchase a portion of one of its common areas adjacent to their lot to combine it and offer the entire parcel for sale. He explained that WIA's covenants do not allow it to sell or transfer any common area to any individual. He noted that it would take a vote with two-thirds of property owners agreeing to even allow an easement to a public utility. The only