

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, July 17 and 25

## Board president resigns; board reorganizes

By James Howald

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board met twice in July. At the regularly scheduled meeting, board President Barrie Town resigned, citing health reasons, which led to a special meeting on July 25 to fill the vacated seat and reorganize the board. The board heard a presentation on Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)—sometimes called “forever chemicals”—and considered awarding a contract for the district’s portion of the project to widen Highway 105.

District Manager Jessie Shaffer presented a mid-year budget update. The board considered the results of the acoustic evaluation of its pipelines, as well as operational reports. The regularly scheduled board meeting ended with an executive session.

### Board appoints new member and reorganizes

Town opened the July 17 regular meeting by announcing his resignation, effective July 19, telling the board he was doing so reluctantly at the advice of his doctor. He said two residents had expressed an interest in being appointed to replace him: Jim Taylor, who had served on the WWSD board previously, and Wendy Fisher, an employee of a local bank who wanted to contribute to the community.

At the July 25 special meeting, board Treasurer Roy Martinez said WWSD was at a critical point in its history due to its participation in the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) which, if implemented, would solve the problem of how to make the water purchased along with the Woodmoor Ranch property near Fountain Creek available to district customers. Martinez said the board needed qualified candidates for appointment who were familiar with district history and issues and who could hit the ground running. Martinez nominated Brian Bush for the vacant seat.

Bush has previously served two terms on the WWSD board as president. He could not run in the last election, since board members can only be elected twice, but the law allows him to be appointed for an additional term. Bush has a background in water law and was president during the recent upgrades to the Lake Pump Station and the Central Water Treatment Plant.

The board voted unanimously to appoint Bush to the vacant seat.

Following Bush’s appointment, the board held elections to reorganize its officers. Bush was elected to serve as board president. Bill Clewe, the incumbent secretary, was re-elected to that post. Martinez was re-elected to continue as treasurer.

### Remedy for PFAS uncertain

District Engineer Ariel Hacker gave the board a presentation on PFAS, focusing on the many uncertainties about how they will be addressed. She said PFAS are manmade chemicals that were first introduced in the 1940s and have now become ubiquitous. PFAS occur in non-stick cookware, clothing, cosmetics, paint, furniture, cleaning products, fire-fighting foam, and many other products. They are sometimes called “forever chemicals” because they break down slowly. PFAS have found their way into water systems, the soil, and aquifers and this cycle will continue as long as they are in the products we buy. They are linked to many serious illness-

es, including cancers, Hacker said. Hacker mentioned a large-scale study done 15 years ago that showed PFAS were linked to thyroid disease, high cholesterol, as well as kidney and testicular cancer.

Hacker mentioned that fire-fighting foam used at Peterson Air Force Base has contaminated drinking water in Widefield, Security, and Fountain, causing those communities to shut down wells and to find ways of removing the chemicals from drinking water. The City of Fountain installed a Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) treatment system, partially funded by Peterson Air Force Base.

Hacker emphasized that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not yet completely defined standards for PFAS in drinking water. In spring 2021, the EPA issued regulations for perfluorooctanoic acid and perfluorooctane sulfate and announced it would evaluate the family of PFAS for regulatory action. That evaluation is still underway, she said.

In response to a question from District Manager Jessie Shaffer about potential regulation, Operation Superintendent Dan LaFontaine said the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment would regulate PFAS in the state of Colorado. When and how they will do so is unclear, he said.

Shaffer said in addition to GAC there are other technologies to remove PFAS, including anionic exchange systems and biological activated carbon. WWSD needs to begin financial planning for implementing PFAS remediation, he said. He pointed out the towns of Security and Fountain have implemented systems that have led to undetectable levels of PFAS. LaFontaine said WWSD is already testing for PFAS and levels are undetectable, mostly because there are no wastewater streams above WWSD.

### Construction contract awarded

Hacker told the board that the first round of bidding to complete WWSD’s portion of El Paso County’s project to widen Highway 105 between Jackson Creek Parkway and Lake Woodmoor Drive had produced a single bid, which was \$185,000 over the engineer’s estimate. This led WWSD to re-bid the work, she said.

Richard Hood of JVA Inc., a consulting company that advises WWSD, said the project to widen the highway will impact raw and potable water lines, requiring them to be moved. He said the second round of bidding produced three bids, with Wildcat Construction being the low bidder at \$1.12 million, a bid \$60,000 under the engineer’s estimate. He recommended awarding the contract to Wildcat Construction.

Shaffer pointed out that Wildcat Construction was chosen by El Paso County to do the county’s portion of the project, so it would make the project go more smoothly if WWSD also selected it.

The board voted unanimously to award the contract to Wildcat Construction.

**Midyear budget update**  
Shaffer gave the board an updated budget for 2023 and said he would address the largest changes in his remarks.

On the revenue side, the biggest change was a reduction in anticipated tap fees, which were reduced from \$4 million to \$1.6 million. Higher interest rates slowed new construction, Shaffer said, which led to fewer new connections to the district’s water and sewer services. Slower development also led to a reduction of revenue from supplemental water: \$752,510 in supplemental water fees was budgeted, but that was lowered to \$99,842 in the mid-year budget. The unusually rainy spring and summer months lowered water user fees, he said.

Shaffer said the district spent only \$250,000 of the \$500,000 it had budgeted to participate in the EPCRLWA water re-use project.

On a positive note, Shaffer said the higher interest rates had doubled the interest the district receives on its financial reserves, raising it from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

On the expenditure side, Shaffer said the district spent \$75,000 more than expected to repair hardware problems with wells. Costs associated with the project to widen Highway 105 and the project to replace worn out sewer saddles were higher than originally budgeted. Capital improvement projects were budgeted at \$5.8 million, but only \$5.4 million of that will be spent in 2023, he said.

Shaffer said he expected to end 2023 with \$19.6 million in unrestricted reserves.

The board accepted the updated budget without a vote.

### Acoustic evaluation a time saver

Earlier in the year, the district hired RH Borden to help it evaluate the state of its sewer collection pipes. In previous years, district employees had cleaned sewer pipes based on a schedule, cleaning 20 percent of the sewer pipes each year, moving through the entire service area on a five-year schedule. This method meant some time and resources were used cleaning pipes that really did not need service.

Shaffer explained that RH Borden had developed a new technology that uses sound waves to quickly identify pipes that are clear, partially blocked, or totally blocked. Shaffer said the original proposal was for RH Borden to evaluate one-fourth to one-half of the district’s sewer lines, but RH Borden was able to evaluate all the sewer lines with the funds allocated. Shaffer said he was surprised at how quickly RH Borden got through 80 miles of pipeline.

Kwin Peterson of RH Borden said in five weeks his team opened every manhole in the district, did an evaluation of each manhole, evaluated every pipe segment, and recorded all the data for entry into WWSD’s Geographic Information System database for later use. His team found 87% of the pipes did not need cleaning, allowing the district to focus only on the pipes that truly needed cleaning.

LaFontaine said this was the first time the district had a full assessment of all manholes. He estimated the new technology saved the district 3 to 3 1/2 months of labor and equipment usage.

### Highlights of operational reports

- LaFontaine said the rainy spring and summer had led to stormwater infiltrating the sewer collection system through manholes, which increased the flows in the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility.
- The district’s project to replace existing water meters with more advanced units is ongoing.
- Well 12 is out of service due to a pump failure.
- The Cloverleaf development has qualified for conditional acceptance.

### Executive session

The July 17 meeting ended with an executive session to confer with legal counsel on questions relating to the EPCRLWA and on the authority to set fees.

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The next meeting is scheduled for Aug. 14 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](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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Monument Sanitation District, July 19

## Good news on Highway 105 sewer repair

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its July meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board heard an operational report and a financial report from General Manager Mark Parker and briefly discussed two issues that were tabled until the next board meeting.

### Manager’s report

Parker updated the board on a

repair needed on a sewer line that serves the Conoco gas station, the McDonald’s restaurant, and Jarrito Loco. The line runs under Highway 105, and at the previous meeting Parker said the line was 14 feet underground and if the repair required the line to be excavated traffic on the highway would be impacted. At the July meeting, Parker said following a discussion with engineers he

believed the repair could be made by lining the pipe without digging it up.

Parker said he had signed up the district to participate in CoWARN, a statewide water and wastewater response network. CoWARN facilitates mutual aid between utilities to resolve emergency situations, he said, adding that membership does not obligate members to offer or accept aid.

Parker told the board that Black Forest Foods Café and Delicatessen, which rents a third of the MSD headquarters building, was struggling with inadequate heating and air conditioning. MSD, as landlord, would be responsible for any necessary upgrades.

In his discussion of district finances, Parker mentioned the district was receiving fewer requests for sewer taps, which



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