

75% to 85% funded by property taxes). He testified at the State Capital stating, "It was unwise to put all of your eggs in one basket and keep money in the bank, but sensible to diversify, with investments and property." When the county fire chiefs requested impact fee collection in unincorporated El Paso County in 2018, the county commissioners defeated the proposal, said Kovacs.

Financial update

- Kelly read the financial report as of March 31, and said:
- The first installment of the property tax revenue, about \$4.9 million, and all other revenue streams are tracking very well.
 - Impact Fees received year to date were \$85,698 or 42.8% of the annual budget projected at a revenue of \$200,000.
 - Overall revenue received year to date was

- about \$6.7 million or about 30.4% of the projected 2024 annual income budget set at \$22 million.
- Wages and benefits were a little over budget year to date.
 - Overall expenses were about \$4.54 million, about 27.8% of the projected 2024 expense budget set at about \$16.33 million.

The board accepted the financial report as presented.

Chief's report

- Kovacs said the following:
- The Pikes Peak Office of Emergency Management supported the district during the March 13-15 storm, listening to the district's concerns to avoid closing I-25.
 - The district brought extra staff ahead of the storm and had budgeted to accommodate some staff in hotels during the event. See www.ocn.me/v24n4.

- An in-house engineer hiring candidate process had begun for two positions that became available after the lieutenant promotions occurred in January. Three internal staffers are competing for the two positions; testing will take place in May.
- Two district staffers are enrolled in paramedic school.
- The district received a thank you card from Bent County for sending a crew with a Type 6 brush truck to assist for two days during the Boggsville Fire.

Forest Service controlled burn update

- Division Chief of Community Risk Reduction Jonathan Bradley said the following:
- The Forest Service prescribed burn in the Mount Herman and Monument Preserve area is scheduled for

- mid-July and is dependent on a match-up with fuel moistures and the weather conditions.
- The burn will begin in the north near Mount Herman Road and work south into Monument Preserve, focusing on the masticated area that was completed over the past few years. The plan is to burn out the scrub oak regrowth to create a healthy ponderosa pine forest.
- The district is liaising with homeowners association ambassadors to ensure information reaches affected property owners, especially those that border the forest.
- The seasonal chipping program is scheduled to begin on May 11, and a resident licensed with the Forest Service to do mitigation work will mitigate along private property lines with other volunteers in the

planned controlled burn area.

- The district will chip the debris the volunteers mitigate.

The communities around the burn areas will be much safer in the future, said Bradley.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. A short special meeting is scheduled for May 8 at 6:30 p.m. to approve the next phase in the merger. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 22 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom 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 Town Council, April 1 and 15

Redistricting, property purchase, Higby Road development, and Pinball Pub

By Chris Jeub
Monument's Town Council met in April to consider redistricting ordinances addressing population disparities, a real estate acquisition aiming to expand development opportunities, and Higby Road's development. The approval of a new lodging and entertainment liquor license for Colorado Pinball Pub promises to add a unique entertainment option to the community.

Redistricting ordinance passes unanimously

Presented by Town Attorney Bob Cole, Ordinance No. 09-2024 focused on the adjustment of residential district boundaries and the incorporation of Section 1.12.050 into the Monument Municipal Code. GIS Technician Connie Driedger delivered a comprehensive presentation explaining the redistricting process showing adherence to legal statutes and principles of equitable representation, including factors such as equal representation, racial equity, and community preservation. The methodology, rooted in population estimates derived from 2020 census data and the recent his-

tory of building permits, highlighted the substantial population growth from 2020 to 2024, prompting the imperative for redistricting to rectify ensuing disparities. Community feedback echoed the sentiment of thoroughness, with Home Rule Charter Committee member Brandi Turner lauding the achieved balance in district populations.

Mayor Pro Tem Steve King and Mayor Mitch LaKind lauded the efforts of Driedger and the committee, branding the outcome as a "slam-dunk" during the council's response segment. No objections or concerns arose from council members. The ordinance passed 7-0.

Gold Canyon Road property purchase

Town Council deliberated on Ordinance No. 10-2024, which focused on authorizing the purchase of real property at 980 and 992 Gold Canyon Road. Presented by Cole, the proposed acquisition aimed to provide the town with additional opportunities for development. The terms of the purchase were outlined, indicating the vacant prop-

erty would cost \$875,000.

During the discussion, Councilmember Laura Kronick raised concerns regarding the necessity of additional surveying, which Cole recommended, emphasizing risk reduction. Councilmember Jim Romanello inquired about the intended use of the property, prompting Town Manager Mike Foreman to clarify that its utilization would be subject to the council's decision, potentially adding to the town's property holdings. Councilmember Steve King sought clarification on the proposed uses for the property, while Councilmember Marco Fiorito queried the potential consequences of not proceeding with the purchase, to which Foreman highlighted the absence of risks to the town but acknowledged the availability of alternative buyers.

In the public comment session, a resident of Village Center Woodmoor expressed support for the town's acquisition, citing longstanding discussions and safety concerns regarding traffic access from Highway 105. Conversely,

another resident voiced apprehension about increased traffic and potential adverse impacts on residential neighborhoods and property values. Despite these concerns, the ordinance passed unanimously with a 7-0 vote. Romanello additionally commented on the Village Center Metro Board's financial situation, attributing it to the board's reluctance to accept the property as commercial.

Higby Road

A lengthy discussion unfolded regarding the classification of Higby Road, a crucial thoroughfare in Monument. Foreman initiated the discussion, highlighting the significance of the right-of-way for Higby Road and its design requirements as a key staff concern.

General manager of Triview Metropolitan District James McGrady provided historical context, explaining the six-year endeavor to include Higby Road into Monument's jurisdiction. He emphasized efforts dating back to June 2021 when an annexation agreement allocated \$2 million for road design. Shawn

Hayes, a roadway design engineer, detailed plans for Higby Road, including features like sidewalks, bike lanes, and modifications to improve safety.

Concerns were raised by council members about discrepancies between the proposed development plans and the town's ordinances regarding the right-of-way width. Despite assertions from developers that road widths would not change, tensions arose regarding adherence to planning documents versus engineering considerations. The debate oscillated between the need for flexibility in development plans and the importance of upholding established ordinances.

Council members sought clarity on the necessity of further amendments to development plans and the town's role in providing direction for the project. While there was consensus on maintaining a 100-foot right-of-way within town limits, ongoing discussions underscored the need for clear guidance and resolution to move forward with the road project effectively.

Pinball Pub license approved

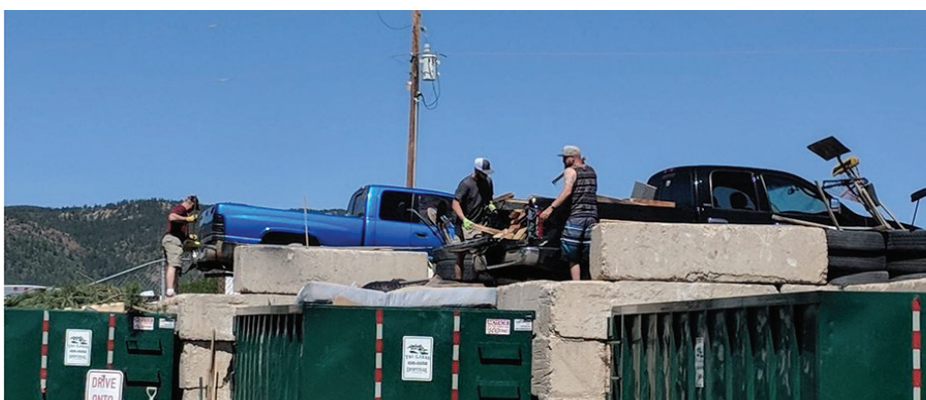
The council addressed an application for a new lodging and entertainment liquor license by Colorado Pinball Monument LLC, operating as Colorado Pinball Pub at 303 Highway 105 Ste. B. The application received unanimous approval from the Town Council. Owner Dan Nikolich took questions from King about the nature of Pinball Monument. Nikolich clarified that the pub offers a combination of pinball and arcade games, along with a selection of drinks and food items. The establishment's website highlights its offerings, including a variety of whiskeys, hand-crafted cocktails, and classic arcade entertainment. The motion for approval passed with a vote of 7-0.

The Monument Council



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