

pipe around the town's water meter rather than through it. Wicklund stated that the town's annual metered water use figures for Safeway provided by the town to the district had substantially declined since 2009.

No sewer district can accurately meter individual commercial wastewater service line flows due to the amount of biosolids in the flow, so Monument Sanitation District uses the potable water consumption figures for the past calendar year that are provided by the town after

the first of the year. These monthly commercial water meter readings are used by the district to calculate equal monthly commercial sewer service fees.

These equal commercial sewer service fees are updated for each commercial customer annually on May 1 to reflect the average monthly water consumption for the previous calendar year. The 12 equal payments apply through April 30 of the following year. So, commercial wastewater bills are always based on the previous calendar year's total potable water consumption. For example, the district's commercial fees that are based on calendar year 2013 town drinking water consumption will be paid from May 1, 2014 through April 30, 2015.

All of the wastewater flows from Monument Sanitation District, including Safeway's, are measured using a high-flow, wide-aperture tube that can measure wastewater containing biosolids without the difficulty that biosolids would create inside a smaller diameter drinking water meter used inside an individual commercial building. The district has to pay for treating all of the wastewater from Safeway because all of it is metered by the Tri-Lakes facility tube, unlike the discovered Safeway water meter with the open bypass valve.

The inaccurately low Safeway drinking water use figures given to the district by the town were less than the actual amount of potable water used by Safeway and less than subsequently delivered to the Tri-Lakes facility and measured by the facility's tube. These faulty town figures, unknown to both the town and the district, created a faulty basis leading to district underbilling of Safeway since 2010. The district could only bill the store for the amount of water that went through Safeway's water meter and could not bill Safeway for the water it was using that went through the bypass rather than the meter.

Wicklund said that Monument residents who use town water should not have to pay the extra cost of treating and delivering the unmetered drinking water that Safeway used through higher water rates. Nor should residents have to pay the extra cost for treatment of Safeway's unmetered drinking water through higher sewer fees.

Wicklund stated that he and the district's attorney Larry Gaddis had determined that the most reasonable approach for correcting the underbilling of Safeway was to determine Safeway's average monthly drinking water use for the years 1997 through 2009 as a baseline. Wicklund then subtracted the amount of water use metered by the town each month after 2009 from the average calculated for the 13-year baseline period to determine the amount of water Safeway used that did not go through the

town's water meter. He then calculated the additional fee owed the district for this unmetered town water for each month since Jan. 1, 2010 plus the resulting monthly late fees.

Wicklund said Gaddis coordinated on Wicklund's letter to Safeway and the spreadsheet Wicklund used to calculate each month's underbilling amounts and corresponding monthly late fees that Safeway would be charged.

Wicklund also noted that the district will watch Safeway's town potable water account for the next five years to determine if any district credits to Safeway appear to be necessary. The district had not yet received a response from Safeway.

Wicklund noted that he could not discuss any specifics of Safeway's proprietary monthly water use in open session.

Wicklund's letter and a bill listing each month's unpaid service fee and late fee were sent to Safeway corporate headquarters and the Highway 105 Safeway store manager. Copies were sent to Monument Town Manager Pamela Smith, Monument Public Works Director Tom Tharnish, and Monument Utility Billing Technician Connie Paillette. Wicklund noted Paillette had indicated to him that the town would not be seeking reimbursement for the potable water that appears to have been rerouted around the town's meter by the bypass pipe/valve assembly. Safeway has notified the town that it intends to remove the bypass pipe and valve assembly that was passing water around the town's meter.

Lift station update

Wicklund noted that J&K Excavating Co. had just removed the existing pump manifolds at the bottom of the wet wells in the Wakonda Hills lift station and installed new manifolds at the top of these wet wells so that repairs could be made without having technicians having to enter the wet well. The invoice for this removal and replacement expense will be listed in a future cash summary and financial report.

Wicklund also noted that installation of new digital pressure transducer control systems for each of the district's lift stations has been completed as well.

The meeting adjourned at 11:24 p.m.

The next meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on May 15 in the district conference room at 130 Second St. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month. Information: 481-4886.

Jim Kendrick can be reached at jimkendrick@ocn.me.

Help Wanted
 A multi-tasking position at Premier Vision in Monument. Optometry Assistant/Optician with insurance billing, front desk, and sales experience a plus. Weekdays, flex hours, full/part-time. Will train.
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