

District Manager Report – September 25, 2024

Saguache County Grant - Water Loss Prevention Project (Capital Project)

- Bids were due on 02/19/2024 – Present to BoD for selection
- Bids were well over the budgeted amount
 - The \$180k meter project was awarded to Cooley & Sons
 - Parts were received on the week of 5/6
 - Pre-construction meeting scheduled for 5/13
- Majority of excavation and piping are complete
 - Meters are expected to be delivered and installed the week of 7/15
- Meters were turned on and pressure tested successfully the week of 8/5
 - Will be advertising for final payment
 - District Manager provided a project update to the Saguache BOCC on 8/13
- Advertisement for final payment has been posted

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Water lease negotiations

- Management will start defining “drought” conditions
 - Outline restrictions for irrigation and use of MHE Well in a drought
 - Draft presented for legal review
- USFWS approved a 1 year extension to our short-term agreement
- Rio Grande Chub & Rio Grande Sucker no longer listed under the Endangered Species Act
- Present draft drought restrictions to BOD for approval prior to submission to USFWS
 - USFWS liked the drought restrictions
- USFWS would like to discuss the possibility of the District purchasing water rights, or possibly being given credit for relinquishing certain wells
 - Attorney for USFWS will be retiring in May 2024

Town of Crestone (ToC) – Sewer Service Negotiations

- No update for April
 - The Discharge Permit was on the agenda of the last trustee meeting
- No update for May
 - ToC has been unresponsive
- ToC held an open meeting on 6/18 to discuss the IGA and Discharge permit
 - Instructed counsel to respond to the District
- A response to the draft IGA was received on 7/31
 - No response to draft discharge permit
 - Several compliance questions received from ToC
 - Our response will be reviewed and approved by BOD
- The District’s updated IGA draft was transmitted to the ToC attorney in August, 2024
 - No response has been received from the ToC as of 9/25/24

Aspen Wastewater Treatment Facility (AWWTF)

- Loading data suggests additional capacity may not be necessary – Averaging 40% capacity (have not exceeded 60% capacity since 11/2022)
 - More frequent sampling
 - EQ Basin cleaning program
 - Auto samplers
- Some issues are present – Health or Safety hazards prioritized
 - Structural engineer inspection of foundation
 - Industrial health & safety inspection
- Inspections are underway
 - An initial property inspection identified several deficiencies
 - Initial quote for structural, mechanical/plumbing, and electrical inspections were much higher than expected (\$9,000), will be reviewing other options.
 - Met with structural engineer – recommended laser measurements
- Met with BOCC at AWWTF to discuss widening the relief route.
 - Looking for copy - Will be getting a survey completed at AWWTF and Stables Lift Station to determine boundaries and easements
- Foundation and Structure are satisfactory – HVAC/mechanical and Electrical inspections are pending

Grant Opportunities

- Congresswoman Lauren Boebert – Community Project Funding
 - Status – Pending
 - Request was for \$1,450,000 to help with Water Loss Prevention and new residential meters
 - Requested up date with no response. Funding was for 2025.
- Colorado Water Resources & Power Development Authority – Drinking Water Revolving Fund
 - Status - Approved for Design and Engineering \$108,370
 - Principal forgiveness loan structure
 - Requires 20% match
 - Closed “loan” on 9/13/24
- USDA
 - Representatives recommended not withdrawing application
 - Submit new PER with chosen alternatives

Personnel

- Chad Tate has accepted the Water and Wastewater Utility Superintendent position as of 9/3/24
 - Congratulation on the new position!
- Roan Blankenship changed to full-time status as of the week of 9/16

OLD BUSINESS

Board Meetings

- Consider change to in person/hybrid meetings

NEW BUSINESS

2025 Budget

- Held initial meeting with the Budget Committee
 - The draft budget will be presented to the Board in early October

Phone Service

- Completed transfer to VOIP provided by Ciello
 - Much needed upgrade
 - System is very user friendly and customers & staff seem to like it
 - Cellphone backup during internet outage
 - Reimbursement for Admin Manager phone
 - Add dedicated Admin cell phone
 - Take messages – not much to be done without internet

Work Schedule Follow Up – 4/10's

Pros -

- Feedback from the team has been positive, everyone prefers the 4/10's
 - Better work life balance
 - Fewer trips to the office
 - Using less PTO
- Less calls haven been going to Centratel - answering more calls ourselves
 - Reduced answering service costs
 - Better and faster customer service

Cons -

- Increase in Overtime expense for Operators
 - More days to cover when the work days are not staggered
 - Operators are beginning to use more comp time instead of OT
 - OT expense should reduce as more Operators see the benefits of comp time

Recommendation -

- Continue 4/10 trial for another 3 months to determine how the schedule is impacted by fall and winter daylight hours

Health Insurance Costs

- The District currently covers 100% of employee health insurance
 - \$669 Per person in 2024 - increasing 13.5% to \$759 in 2025
 - Expense to District will be \$91,080 in 2025
- In 2025 the total monthly cost to add a spouse and 3+ children will be \$1,900
 - This leaves the employee with an out of pocket monthly expense of \$1,141
 - Currently no employees have opted in to have their families included in the insurance plan

➤ As an added benefit to employees and to remain competitive in the job market – recommend covering a portion of the cost to add a spouse and/or family to the plan

- With the District paying \$759 of that cost, the employee is responsible for \$1,141 per month
- If the District agreed to pay half of the employee portion to add a family to the plan, the expense will increase to \$1,330 per employee per month or approximately \$159K per year (very conservative estimate, assumes everyone opts in and has a family plan).

Employee Only	Employee+Spouse	Employee+Child	Employee+Children	Employee+Family
\$759	\$1,672	\$1,592	\$1,592	\$1,900

- Discussed this option with the budget committee and they supported the change
 - However, the budget won't be approved until November or December
 - Employees can only make changes during open enrolment in October
- Motion to approve or deny