



THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE

Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: rotary.org rotary5470.org northforkrotary.org

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180 - Chartered 12/20/22

Vol 59 Issue 16 – June 18, 2020

Guest Editor: Bain Weinberger

LAST MEETING: June 11, 2020 (Virtual Meeting held via Zoom)

President Coombe presided.

Visiting Rotarians: none

Other Guests: Dave Knutson

Key Guest: No key guest

(Annette now has the key).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- We had 56% turnout for the Zoom meeting today.
- \$600 has been collected so far for Friends of Gueoul (<https://gueoul.org/>) in Senegal. New member Judy Beggs requested donations at the last meeting to provide rice for their students. Individual contributions should be routed through the Rotary Foundation (P.O. Box 1543, Paonia).
- Annette wanted to remind everyone about the concert event being held June 17 at the Tru Vu Drive-in Theatre in Delta as well as on-line via Facebook in support of Hope West Hospice. Gates open at 7:30 p.m. and music begins at 8:30 p.m. If you want to attend but do not have a Facebook account, use this link to enter the concert: <https://www.facebook.com/events/265548161170688/>
- So far, no groups larger than 10 people are permitted in Town Park, so it would not be possible to hold a Rotary meeting there. Delta County has requested a variance, so it may be possible to have the June 25th business meeting in the park for the induction of the new Board and co-Presidents.

PROGRAM: Paonia Town Issues

President Coombe introduced Mary Bachran, the new Paonia mayor.

Ms. Bachran provided an overview of town issues and operations, beginning with the announcement that the Town had hired Corinne [Ferguson] as the official Town Administrator.

Police:

- As police supervisor, Ms. Bachran has been meeting with Police Chief Neil Ferguson. The force is down to 3 people. They would like to have at least 5. It would require 9-10 people for 24/7 coverage, but this is not considered necessary. With 5 officers, can cover 7 days a week up until 2:00 AM on weekends and until midnight during the week. On-call officers provide coverage when there are no officers on duty, with response times of 5-10



minutes. The County Sheriff's office provides back up if the local officers need assistance.

- The departmental use of force policies meet all current standards, except for a "duty to intervene". This is being added to the policies.
- Delta county is considering bringing the "Back the Badge" funding initiative back to the voters this Fall. Currently working to determine level of support in the communities.

Parks:

- Poulos Park:
 - Back wall may be designated an official graffiti wall. Would need permission from Masons (or new building owner) to do anything with the north wall of the park, such as a mural.
 - The memorial has been moved and lights have been installed.
 - Ground cover and grass has been installed.
- Town Park:
 - Teen Center has been re-roofed.
 - Grants being sought for further upgrades, including winterizing the rest rooms.
 - A wall of the Teen Center may also be designated an official graffiti wall.
 - Looking at installing another bathroom near the playground.
 - Defunct sandbox to be converted to a shaded seating area.
- Apple Valley:
 - Red Maple as a memorial to Jordan Schevene planted by the Tree Board.

Water:

- Have been some recent water breaks, mainly due to malfunctioning pressure reduction valve. A new valve and a backup have been installed.
- The water infrastructure study is proceeding. Expected to be completed by late summer or early fall. The report will specify how many taps the system can accommodate.
- An asset inventory and mapping project is also being conducted to include everything the town owns. Equipment is being cataloged along with expected date for replacement. Map overlays will show where everything is located as well as sidewalk replacements and water infrastructure improvements.
- Town looking at "regionalizing" water companies in the valley. This would bring the smaller private water companies back into the Town system. They would no longer have to hire a licensed manager, nor would they need to re-test water as it enters their systems. The Town would also take over maintenance of the pipes and related infrastructure. The German Creek system will be used as a test case over the next year.

Development:

- In preliminary conversations with developer of Riverbank Subdivision, located off of Price Road next to the river and west of the high school. 15 units would be developed and include green space on a dead-end road. An easement for a trail along the river behind the development is also being negotiated. Ivo Renkema is the property owner and has been "very accommodating" since the first meeting. The neighbors are supportive of a 15-unit development.

COVID Fallout:

- Tax revenues have increased as opposed the anticipated decrease, so the Town is in an OK position financially. Some local businesses are seeing record sales as a result of people staying at home and shopping in town. Amazon sales tax also remitted to Town. And some Town expenses will be billable to the Federal support programs.
- Cherry Days has been cancelled, and probably the BMW rally as well.
- Unsure about Pickin in the Park. Bands are not touring right now, so may have to rely on local musicians. Delta county will need to approve a variance to permit the number of people anticipated to attend.
- Harvest Festival being moved back to Grand Avenue as a Town celebration instead of a multi-state event.
- Once the County approves meetings of more than 10 people, Town meetings will be re-opened to the public. Meetings will continue to be live-streamed as well for those not comfortable with in-person

meetings.

- Town Board has taken first steps to allow local restaurants to expand seating outdoors. Also discussing closing Grand Ave. between 3rd and 1st from 6 to 9 PM Friday thru Sunday for outdoor restaurant seating. Depends on interest from local restaurants.

Q & A:

Q: How does it feel to be the first female mayor of Paonia?

A: Putting more females in political office is a win across the board. Could provide a huge culture change if half the political offices in the country were filled by women.

Q: What has been your biggest surprise since becoming Mayor?

A: That the office actually has some power to it. Possible to set the tone of the town and foster cooperation, such as working with Hotchkiss on a joint prosperity plan and talking to the Colorado Oil and Gas commission so the rules work for small towns like ours.

Q: Will a favorable water survey allow the Town to sell out-of-town water taps?

A: Once the smaller water companies are adsorbed, these will all become in-town water taps. Need to see the report before any decisions such as this can be made.

Q: Will Paonia support a vote on allowing recreational cannabis sales in the town?

A: Yes, the Government Affairs and Public Safety Committee is working to draft legislation to put on the ballot this Fall to allow retail recreational cannabis sales in town. It would be a great revenue source as well as attracting tourists into town to shop (and eat ice cream). And it would also provide a source of year-round employment in the town.

Q: What are your plans to enhance communication with town members, particularly seniors?

A: Plan to meet regularly with folks at the Senior Center. May also insert a weekly feature in the High Country Shopper to highlight major issues in the town and report on public works projects. Would also like to institute “Mondays with the Mayor” at local coffee shops to allow open discussion about town government and issues.

UPCOMING MEETING PROGRAMS:

| Date | Speaker | Program | Member |
|---------|---|------------------------|------------|
| 6/18/19 | New Executive Director of Friends of Gueoul | Friends of Gueoul | Judy Beggs |
| 6/25/19 | | New Officers installed | |

