



## **THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE**

### **Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley**

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: [rotary.org](http://rotary.org) [rotary5470.org](http://rotary5470.org) [northforkrotary.org](http://northforkrotary.org)

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180 - Chartered 12/20/22

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Guest Editor: Bain Weinberger

**LAST MEETING: November 21, 2019**

President Coombe presided.

Visiting Rotarians: Dave Frank, Assistant District Governor  
Francois Pretorias, former club member.  
Charles Stewart, former club president.

Key Guest: None

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- No Meeting on 12/26 or 1/2
- Dave Frank, Assistant District Governor had several announcements:
  - The District Membership Team said the North Fork Valley Club was “doing great”.
  - The Membership Committee should have at least 3 people on it.
  - The District has sent out a notice that each club needs to have a Youth Protection Policy in place. Clubs can use the one supplied by the District, or craft their own.
  - All of the area clubs have gotten together on a District Grant for a scholarship to the Technical College of the Rockies. The grant has been approved in the amount of \$4000, matching the \$4000 put up by the Clubs for a total Rotary grant of \$8000. This will be combined with another TCR matching grant for a grand total of \$16,000 in scholarships. This is the first time multiple clubs in the District have pooled their resources for a grant proposal.
- There are a number of events taking place on December 7<sup>th</sup>:
  - The annual Blue Sage Craft Fair. There will be a horse-drawn hay ride leaving from Poulos Park.
  - A “pop-up” in Poulos Park from 10am-5pm. There will be a mock-up of what the park will look like when it is finished. People are encouraged to come and make suggestions regarding what they would like to see there. There will also be entertainment and a mural wall where design suggestions for a new mural on the back wall can be made. Donations for the park project will also be accepted.
  - There will be a wrapping party for the Kids Christmas Party from Noon to 4:00. There are about 700 gifts that need to be wrapped. There will be door prizes.
  - The Library is having a book sale.
- In the football pool, Susie tied with Bill with 11 correct but won on the tie breaker. She donated her winnings to the Scholarship Fund.

## **PROGRAM: Citizen's Water Initiative**

Bob Lario introduced dedicated public servant Charles Stewart, Mayor of Paonia and former City Council Member.

Mayor Stewart was a member of the NFV Rotary Club for 15 years and was Club President in 1997.

The Citizen's Water Initiative will be voted on in January. The initiative was brought by a citizen who gathered sufficient signatures to get the initiative on the ballot.

The initiative would create a moratorium on the sale of Town of Paonia water taps. It would also prohibit the extension of any water line. No sales could occur until a licensed engineer could certify that the town had sufficient water and water infrastructure to supply for the foreseeable future all of the taps the town has a legal obligation to supply without adversely affecting current tap holders. A further sale of taps would have to be certified by the engineer.

This initiative was brought about as a result of the city water crisis last Winter, when some residents were without water for up to ten days. The problem was the result of two big breaks in water mains that were difficult to detect along with a valve failure. One leak was flowing through rocks into the river and was only detected due to chlorine being found in the river water. The other was near the elementary school at an improperly located water meter. These malfunctions resulted in water rushing out of the system faster than it could be brought in. It had nothing to do with a lack of water.

While a very difficult situation, it did bring about discussions regarding the town water system and water in general. The town gets water from 32 different springs via 20 miles of collection lines. There are two treatment plants and about 20 miles of distribution lines. The water system serves 1,260 accounts, both in town and out of town. This includes 27 out-of-town water companies that the town provides with water. There are 478 inactive stand-by accounts, 317 of which belong to Arch Coal in order to provide water for miner's housing, which never materialized. The question is, what happens if all of these inactive accounts come on-line at the same time?

Supporters of the initiative are concerned that the town may not be able to service the inactive accounts and therefore should not be selling any additional taps until that issue is resolved.

In terms of the water and water system, the town has plenty of water as well as treatment capacity. The town can treat roughly six times the average amount of water that is currently being consumed. As for supply, more water is currently being diverted from the treatment plants than is being treated. Servicing the additional unused taps could be done "at the touch of a button".

There is always concern about what will happen to the water supply in drought situations. To address this, the town is contracting with an engineering firm to evaluate the water system and ensure the system can sustain a multi-year drought. The last such report was created in 2004 when the water system was much different than it is now. Since 2012, the town has spent about \$8 million upgrading water treatment facilities, replacing lines and cross-connecting the two water distribution systems. Obtaining additional surface water storage is also being investigated. The upgraded treatment facilities can now treat surface water, which was not the case in the past. The town is also investigating purchasing unused water taps back.

There are several problems with the proposed ordinance as written. For one thing, it may be difficult to find an engineer willing to provide the sorts of assurances the ordinance requires for selling new taps. It is also possible that improvements made to the system would require re-certification in order to take advantage of any additional capacity realized. There is also a possibility that the ordinance would result in rate increases due to

loss of revenue from selling new taps. Loss of construction jobs and construction related revenue for local businesses due to the inability to sell new taps is also a real possibility. There is also the possibility that a moratorium on selling taps would signal that Paonia is economically dead and would prevent the town from making desirable annexations of land. The inability to extend existing water lines could also cause various problems.

Finally, Mayor Stewart encouraged those in attendance to participate in the political life of the Town by voting and by running for one of several Town Board openings in the April elections.

Q and A:

Q: Who can vote in the election?

A: Only residents of Paonia are eligible to vote in the election. Even those served by out-of-town water companies that would be impacted by the proposed ordinance are not able to vote on it.

Q: Does the Town charge the same base rate for active and inactive taps?

A: Not really sure as the inactive fee was recently reset, but the situation with Arch Coal’s taps is a special case due to contractual agreements.

Q: Is there an active effort to negotiate with Arch?

A: Yes.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

Date	Speaker	Program	Member
12/5/2019			Ed Bliss
12/12/2019	Corrine Ferguson	Paonia Town Manager	Kevin Parks
12/19/2019	Scott and Cari Johnson	Forest Service Project up Stephens Gulch to improve Elk habitat	Jackie Parks
12/26/2019		no meeting (Boxing Day)	
1/2/2020		no meeting	
1/9/20			Karri Polson
1/16/20	Emily Wassell	Paonia Experiential Leadership Academy	Greg Thompson
1/23/20			Norm Lewark
1/30/20		Fifth Thursday	
2/6/20			Felix Belmont
2/13/20			Bill Bishop
2/20/20			Sarah Bishop
2/27/20			Ed Bliss



