

EL RANCHO FLORIDA METROPOLITAN DISTRICT 2024 BUDGET MESSAGE

The Budget is a means for citizens to understand the financial aspect of their community government, El Rancho Florida Metropolitan District. It is a guide, a planning document, of amounts to be spent on services within the district. The Budget was developed by the El Rancho Florida Metropolitan District Board of Directors and their Budget Officer. It reflects the projected spending plan for improvements and services associated with the District's road system, water system and common areas.

ELECTION 2004:

In May 2004, the electors of El Rancho Florida Metropolitan District voted to 'De-Bruce', Amendment No.1. This permitted the District to accept, collect, retain and expend the full revenues generated from any and all sources during fiscal year 2004 and each subsequent year, as permitted by law, including and without limitation, the revenues generated from payment of taxes and fees, grants, gifts, loans or any other source of revenue, notwithstanding the provisions of Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution ("TABOR"), and as a permanent waiver of section 29-1-301, C.R.S. ("5.5% revenue limitation"), or any other law.

Term limitations for the Board of Directors were eliminated in the 1996 election.

ELECTION 2008:

In November 2008, the District asked the electors of El Rancho Florida Metropolitan District for voter approval on Ballot Issue 5C. The ballot issue was passed by the electors with an 85.87% **Yes** and 14.13% **No**. The issue allows the District to increase their debt up to \$2,000,000 and assess a mill levy or increase monthly water fees, for needed improvements to the water system. The Board of Directors is also pursuing grants, low interest loans, and Federal and State assistance whenever the District may qualify for funding.

GENERAL FUND:

The primary sources of General Fund revenue are projected to be \$18,000 from Highway User Tax and \$38,235 from User Fees. The General Fund revenues are used to provide contract services, address needed road improvements and maintain equipment associated with continuance of the District road system. In 2010 the District did gravel replacement and dust control on several of the roads throughout the Subdivision. This expense was approximately \$75,000. It is the intention of the Board to do similar types of road maintenance on an annual, rotational basis. In 2016 expenditures of \$40,468 was for gravel and road base to do 'minimal' road repairs due to the impact of the Distribution Line Improvements project. The Board used the balance of the CWAPA loan to fund the 2016 improvements. The remainder of the Road Project was completed in 2017 in the amount of \$94,462, well under the estimated amount of \$120,000. A transfer from the Enterprise Fund to the General Fund in the amount of \$55,000 brought the roads to a condition that is better than the 'pre-project' condition. The Board has put their grader

operator/snow removal contractor on a part time employee basis. With that decision there are additional expenses related to having employees but the liability concerns are lessened by the decision. For 2024 the Board anticipates total annual expenses of \$125,750. The difference of \$45,826 was due to increased gravel and road improvements. Those monies annually are spent on Culvert cleaning/maintenance, additional gravel on the roads, dust control, equipment R&M, rodent control and weed spraying will continue to be done on an annual basis.

The District was placed on the State Historical Register in 1996. This made it possible to receive grant money to restore the railroad bridge over the Florida River. The bridge project, upon completion, cost a total of \$95,030; \$60,340 of which was received in grant money from the State of Colorado.

An increase in the monthly billing of \$140/month to \$160/mo. was effective September 1, 2023. The Board has dedicated 26% of the \$95/month Base Fee billing to the General Fund. The amount of the Capital Assessment for roads is increased to \$55 in 2023 in order to rebuild the reserves for the General Fund after completing District wide water system improvements and road upgrades from the water improvement project. The District will now build up the Road Capital Fund for future road improvements. \$64,500 will be added in 2023 to the fund balance making it \$ 163,399 at the end of 2023.

ENTERPRISE FUND:

The Enterprise Fund was established to finance services to the District's water system and cover all administrative costs of the District. The 'regular' Revenue sources in 2024 for the Fund will be reduced to those of 2023. The regular annual revenue sources include: \$110,511 in User Fees, \$15,960 in Capital Improvement Fees, and projected Water Revenues of \$8,000. The District has used all the Loan proceeds from the Colorado Water and Power Authority Loan (CWAPA) to complete the PH. I, II and PH.III of the Water Improvement Project. Those funds upgraded most of the main lines to 8", placed fire hydrants and valves in the system for looping and isolation purposes in times of water outages. The District has spent \$2.5 million on the System Improvements Project thru 2019. In 2019 the District received from DOLA an Energy Impact grant in the amount of \$400,000 with the District matching that at \$400,000. The PH.III of the water system improvements project was calculated to be around \$984,965. The District completed the PH.III of the project in the amount of \$1,116,339. Those improvements consisted of Engineering for the Design of the improvements at \$30,000, upgrade of their booster pump station for approximately \$174,000, hydrants and valves to finish looping the system and the upgrading 10,385 LF of mains from 4" and 6" mains to 8" C900 in the amount of \$912,339. In 2021, revenue from oil and gas royalties received from BP and RED WILLOW was approximately \$2,000. The amount received for 2024 will vary as a function of gas use and price but is budgeted at the historical amount of \$2,200.

In October of 2000, the District implemented a special assessment of \$15/lot to help meet the annual lease/purchase payment of the Bowman Tract. The land acquisition was implemented to protect the District's water quality and supply. The lease/purchase

agreement on the Bowman Tract was paid off in August of 2005. In 2006 the Board had decided to increase the \$15/month charge to \$40/month/lot to increase reserve funds for future capital improvements to the water system. This fee was decreased in 2009 to \$30/lot and was spent by the Board of Directors for the addition of a new 158,000 gallon tank. In addition to the reserve funds and grant money (\$110,407) from DOLA (December or early January 2010), the improvements were fully funded without the need to impose a mill levy for 2009 or 2010. The District was anticipating costs for the new tank to run approximately \$ 414,000. However, the actual costs came in below that at \$261,315. The system-wide water study, Preliminary Engineering Plan, was budgeted at \$94,000 in 2010. Dependent on funding sources, main water line upgrades, pump house improvements, looping of the water lines, meter upgrades, and miscellaneous improvements were completed on a priority basis over the last 2-4 years. The monthly capital reserve fee will be adjusted annually to build a reserve for future repairs/improvements. For 2023 the Capital Assessment was reduced to \$10/mo./lot.

The District levied a property tax to the lot owners in 1986 for the original water system (\$160,000). The bonds were paid in 2001. With the passing of the Ballot Issue 5C in November of 2008, levying a property tax will be a means for future funding of improvements which began 2012. For repayment on the debt in 2019, an amount of \$ \$81,760 was budgeted. To cover the cost of the debt payment in 2022, a tax will be levied based on a **24.919** mill levy. This is higher than 2021 due to the increased collection of property taxes by La Plata County in 2019. The overpayment by the County of 72,582 was paid back to the County in 2021 leaving the District to increase the mill levy up to the **24.919** mills. This is the normal mill levy except for the past 2 years. These funds are used to make annual payments on the CWAPA Loan of \$1.4 million over the next 11 years. The mill levy is adjusted annually based on property values and the debt of the District. Any 'carry over' of Specific Ownership Taxes collected taxes will be used to reduce the upcoming year's collection amount when setting the mill levy in future years. In 2020 the carryover of taxes collected was \$ 68,950, thus reducing the mill levy for 2021 by 6.441 mills to properties assessed. The carryover will be distributed ½ in 2021 and the remaining balance in 2022 which will reduce the mill levy for both years. The mill levy will be 19.943 mills in 2024. The property tax revenue pays the loan from Colorado Water and Power Authority annually.

The Board of Directors implemented a Water Study in 1992 of the current system to determine the water supply and capital improvements for future demands on the water system. That study was updated in 2010 to include looping of the system lines, upgrades to controls for monitoring storage tank levels, main line upgrades, pump house improvements, meter upgrade program, and installation of isolation valves. The District has drilled an auxiliary well as a backup source for our water supply. In 2006, the Board spent \$65,000 to drill a 2 inch well and to upgrade to a 10 inch water line. The larger line addresses the need to increase chlorine retention time before delivery to the first household. Due to the addition of the new well in 2006, and the new filtration system and pump house in 2013, the District has incurred increased maintenance costs for testing, pumping, and insurance.

The budgeted amount for testing in 2024 is \$2,200. This is calculated with testing

requirements for each year. These costs are related to the re-classification of the District's water system by the State of Colorado. The District's water system was previously classified as a 'ground water system', but after review by the State Engineers it now holds a classification of 'ground water under the direct influence of surface water'. With this new classification the District has incurred additional expense for treatment beyond chlorination in 2012 in the amount of \$68,000 to meet the criteria defined by the State. The District had to implement 'interim measures' approved by the State until the completion of the new pump house by December 31, 2012. The new pump house was completed in early 2013.

In 2014 the Board had been working on improvements to the water Distribution System of the District. The estimated costs of the improvements were expected to total around \$1.5 million. Those improvements included replacement & upgrade of the existing water mains, looping of the system and the addition of hydrants and isolation valves. The amount of work to be completed depended on grant funding thru DOLA and the balance of the loan with CWAPA. The amount listed for those improvements in the 2015 is shown in the budget as \$1,190,000. The Board did receive a grant from DOLA in the amount of \$600,000. With the remaining balance of the CWAPA loan and the DOLA grant the District was able to complete Phase II of the Water System Improvements as planned in the amount of \$1,116,339. Higher than the budgeted amount due to a tie-in to La Plata Archuleta Water District that will serve both Districts in cases of water emergencies. The two districts entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement legalizing the tie-in to benefit both districts. The tie-in was projected to be a cost of \$174,000. That expense is paid for out the District's capital reserve fund. The District completed the La Plata Archuleta Water District's tie-in and emergency 'backup' water source spending \$47,211 which is \$7,789 less than budgeted for in 2021.

In order to have transparency for the tap holders and anyone requiring information on the District, the Board has set up a website indicating the timing of meetings, notices, etc. can be obtained there. The District is linked with the Department of Local Affairs website to enable transparency of the District's operations. The District's web site is: elranchoflorida.org

CONSERVATION TRUST FUND:

Funds for mowing, and improvements to common areas are the expenses budgeted in the Conservation Trust Fund. Money for this fund is received from Colorado State Lottery and amounts to roughly \$1800. There are no improvements for 2024 budgeted but the District will work on building the fund for future improvements to the common areas.

PERSONNEL:

The District has 6 part time employees for administrative services, water operation services, road maintenance, and snow removal. These services were previously contract labor. Legal and auditing services are on a contractual basis.

FEE SCHEDULE:

Monthly User Fees = \$95/developed lot per month

Included in the \$160 Base Fee is 10,000 gallons of water. 74% of the base fee is allocated to the operation and maintenance of the water system (\$70.30 per lot/mo). A tiered rate structure is implemented for summer use beyond the 10,000 gallons to encourage conservation of water. Road maintenance is 24% of the \$95 Base Fee (\$24.70/per lot/mo). \$55 Capital Assessment Fee for the General Fund and \$10 going into the Enterprise Fund is included in the \$160 Base Fee.

Transfer Fees: \$100

Tap Fees: \$10,000 – There are none anticipated for 2024.

Disconnection Fees: \$100

There are only undeveloped lots in the Subdivision and two have prepaid taps as a part of the existing water system. A tap purchased in 2024 will be an amount required to cover all costs of tapping into the water system. Currently the Tap Fee is set at \$10,000 with an Installation Fee of actual ‘time and materials’ to be charged to the lot owner. Tap Fees are adjusted when needed to reflect current costs associated with tapping into the water system.

Capital Improvement Fees:

A special assessment of \$65/lot per month is charged to re-build the reserves to pay for capital improvements to the water system in future years and build the Road Improvement Account for future improvements to the roads. That assessment will result in \$101,100 of revenue to the District. A Road Improvement Fund was set up in 2010 for future road improvements and has a balance of \$134,989 at the end of 2024.

The Board contracted with an engineering firm in 2010 to propose a capital replacement plan, Preliminary Engineering Plan, for 10 to 15 years. Those improvements have been completed. The Board will pursue Grant and financing options whenever possible for projects. In the interim, capital assessment fees will continue at \$65/mo./lot for 2024. This fee has been adjusted to cover costs of ‘long term’ replacement in roads and water system.

METHOD OF ACCOUNTING:

The District operates on a modified accrual basis of accounting each calendar year. An annual Audit or Audit Exemption is performed by a CPA and is sent to the State Auditor for review and approval.