

Local

Public Works

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Schwin added, "It was actually a leak you could see. You could watch the reservoir start to drop."

Owen also told the committee that she and Schwin had been working on the water facility plan update with Murray Smith & Associates, and that the committee should expect to see a draft plan in front of them in the next month to approve before presenting to City Council.

She advised the committee to expect that there may be some really big items in this plan such as possible well-drilling and hydraulic improvements.

She cited supply and demand as a reason as well as having a plan in place to supply water if there is a fire in the watershed as there is no filtration system currently in place to reduce particles that would be present in the event of a fire and water would still need to be provided to the City in that scenario.

She mentioned that the Forest Service could help reduce that risk by reducing fuel in the watershed but stated that has been in the works for over a decade without much progress being made so it was in the best interest of the City to have a backup plan in place and that plan may be having wells.

Discussion of upcoming Wastewater Effluent Disposal Options

The City has for years been operating under an NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit.

This permit allows for wastewater to be discharged into the Powder River.

The permit expired in 2008 but was extended by the DEQ however, the extension is due to expire and a new plan must be presented to obtain a new permit.

DEQ has issued new standards and discharging into the river at the levels that have been maintained is no longer an option. Something new needs to be done.

DEQ has been elusive as to what the new standards are and will be thus making the process difficult.

In the past, the City has

worked with Anderson Perry out of La Grande to develop new ideas with the last update being done in 2010.

The City Council at that time looked at the updated plan and directed Owen to explore the option of discharging the City's affluent wastewater into a wetlands option.

DEQ had been working with the City on that option, but is now unsure as to whether that will work as new contaminants such as phosphorus has become a problem, and it is looking as if arsenic will become an issue as well.

Owen said she felt some new eyes on the project may be in order.

DEQ has suggested a plan for that water disposal that uses it to irrigate crops, the "easy button" as they call it. The problem? It is an extremely expensive alternative—"Primarily because we have to acquire property," explained Owen.

She added, "It takes a lot of space to store our water because of course we can only irrigate our crops here in our growing season and then we have to store the rest of the time therefore I'd need to increase our pond sizes. DEQ also says

you must own or control the land on which the affluent is 'sprinkled' so that means buying more property and it's not like our log time century ranchers are wanting to give away their land to the City."

Keven Shreeve, engineer with Shreeve and Associates based in Kuna, Idaho has been brought on board as a professional consultant for the wastewater issue to help explore more options that may be available.

Shreeve has experience with similar tasks and successfully worked with the City of Caldwell on wastewater concerns for that City.

His idea to create what is called a white paper concept. The idea with this concept is just to give a general overview of a specific topic without getting into the nuts and bolts and in depth costs of the idea.

He said, "My intent is

to first of all go meet with DEQ and see if I can get from them exactly what they are looking for, what the issues are and just be a sponge willing to absorb as much as they are willing to tell. I'm not afraid to ask questions and see if I can't get more definitive answers from them. However, it seems DEQ doesn't even know what is going on as they stated at the last City Council meeting things are changing constantly as far as standards."

This option seems to be the best route for the City right now rather than spending a lot of money on a new study having Shreeve gain insight and report back to the City to develop the best plan of action for the City to take.

Owen advised the committee she was bringing this to them because they are the citizen committee and the direct link to the

citizens of our community.

Whatever choice the City makes will reflect in the community as they will likely pay for a good portion of it through rate increases.

There is some money set aside but not a great deal and there are loan options available; however, those loans hinge on factors like ability to repay based on current rates and our rates would need to be increased to meet those requirements as we are currently at about \$18 and the average is around \$20-\$25.

Community support will be critical in Council's decision of what choice to make that will be right for our community.

This Committee will prove crucial in providing a link between the City and its Citizens through outreach throughout this process.



4th Annual VFW Youth Shoot
November 21, 11 a.m. until finished
at the VFW Memorial Club
2005 Valley in Baker City

Open to kids ages 10-15. 3 age categories with 3 rifles given to the top shooter in each!
Over \$4,000 in prizes including rifles!
Grand prize is a Savage .17 Super mag!
 Age classes are: 10-11, 12-13 and 14-15
 \$10 to preregister or \$15 day of shoot.
 Safety meeting held just prior to shoot.
 Call Karen at 541.403.2214 or Alan at 541.403.2214

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Thankful for my family and friends who have served. Honoring you all today and always. Love you!

—SS



NORTHWEST SHOW
12PM - 3PM

NATIONAL SHOW
8PM - 10PM



THE LARS LARSON SHOW

