

Local

Sumpter City Council handles variety of business despite still-high tensions

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH
Meghan@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Items of business before the Sumpter City Council on Tuesday night included updates on the IFA grant and City Charter.

Council members Samantha Esposito, Robert Armbruster, and Annie Oakley were in attendance with Carey Clarke absent due to personal business.

Mayor Leland Myers opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7 p.m.. He reminded attendees that the meeting was being recorded.

Myers asked City Recorder Julie McKinney to read minutes of the Council meeting on October 13 and a special meeting on October 20. Both minutes were approved unanimously with minor corrections to the latter. After a few questions, payment of bills was approved unanimously.

Planning Commission Appointment

McKinney read a letter of intent from Dave Stellman expressing his desire to serve on the Planning Commission. His appointment was unanimously approved.

Mayor's Report

Myers stated, "I've been trying to catch up with everything we've been doing the last couple or three years." He said he met with Commissioner Harvey to talk about helping with the watershed protection idea and that Harvey is interested in helping.

Myers said the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is pleased that Sumpter is progressing with sewer upgrades.

Myers stated with the recent extension, Sumpter has until September 2016 to get engineering done and till September 2017 to complete construction.

Myers talked to Tom Sisul and Joe Hitz, engineers who did the plan, to see if they would be willing to work with Sumpter again,

and they said they would be.

Myers reported attending a League of Oregon Cities (LOC) meeting in Mount Vernon with Esposito, Oakley, and Julie McKinney.

A settlement conference in regard to the lawsuit was held last week, and Myers said he felt it went very well and that progress seems to be being made.

Utility Manager's Report

Jeff McKinney reported two mainline breaks in the last month, each several miles from town. The breaks occurred about 12 days apart and both were repaired within three days.

The tower main computer is not working. Parts are on order and McKinney stated it should be fixed any day now.

McKinney is working on the sewer issue for Ron Borello. He has provided copies of sewer ordinances to Council and to Borello.

The burn pile is open and preparations for subzero weather, including readying the snowplow, are underway.

Fire Department Report

Kurt Clarke stated the fire danger is now low. Permits are required to burn in town. The spaghetti feed went well. The brush truck is winterized and parked.

The Ford truck has some brake issues and Clarke stated he would like approval to get it looked at. He thanked Kevin Ferguson from Gresham Fire who brought out more jackets and turnouts for them.

Julie McKinney reported that Sumpter Fire Department's work on the Cornet-Windy Ridge Fire brought in \$1267.50 from Oregon Department of Forestry.

She stated there is more time that will be paid through FEMA and that is going through the process.

Myers mentioned the City will need a list of the

new fire fighters for insurance purposes.

IFA Application Grant Myers stated he has made some contact on this application. He said he was assured that whatever Sumpter needs will be financed, up to a grant possibility of \$750,000, not that the funds received will be a full grant.

Myers said he has a call into LOC about whether the City can continue its relationship with Sisul without a new RFP (Request for Proposal). If a new one is needed, the City will need to start right away and then get an engineer on board in about two months.

Myers said he will update the Council when he hears back.

IFA Watershed Grant

Myers stated, "I feel like we have an awful lot on our burners," and suggested setting this application aside, but said he would defer to the rest of Council. After some discussion,

Armbruster agreed to take the lead on finding out more about this grant and its possible benefit to the City.

1972 Charter

Myers provided the Council with copies of a "weeded down version" of the LOC model charter. He stated it addresses several things that haven't been addressed before and updates other things. Council scheduled a special meeting on November 17 at 1:30 p.m.

The meeting is open and anyone may attend. Myers stated he would like to later have one or two workshops and get as many citizens in attendance as possible.

Myers then stated he had several items that someone had requested to add to the agenda.

Bill clarification

Oakley asked about the \$149.99 on last month's bills for a phone upgrade. Myers clarified that this was for a replacement waterproof phone after the

Utility Manager's phone fell in the water and quit working. Jeff McKinney stated this was not an upgrade but a replacement.

Water Tower Repairs

Oakley stated she and Esposito were taken up to the water tower. She said one valve was held open by vice grips and mentioned a battery running some computer stuff that looked like a "rat's nest" of wires. Oakley suggested ordering what's needed to get the tower working right instead of needing "band-aids" all the time.

Julie McKinney stated that the temporary fixes are needed to keep things running smoothly while waiting for parts. Myers stated he has performed plenty of gerrymandering in his own life. Esposito said sure, the temporary fixes work for now, but let's get the other stuff fixed, too. Jeff McKinney stated that Oakley said a lot when she said she didn't know what she was looking at. He stated the plant is designed to use back up batteries for when the power goes out.

Myers said he does not want Council to try and operate "systems and stuff" during council meetings and suggested leaving the operating details to McKinney's judgment.

Oakley asked Myers if he has gone up to look at the tower. He stated he has not yet been able to do so.

At this point, audience member LeAnne Woolf asked if she had heard correctly that Oakley and Armbruster collaborated on the additions to the items of business.

Oakley said that was not correct. She had some items of concern and Armbruster separately had some items of concern.

Armbruster said that when he asked to have items added to the agenda, he was told it was too late.

After some heated discussion, Myers clarified that it looks like everyone is aiming toward getting everything done on the

Friday before Council meetings.

Julie McKinney posts the meeting agenda Friday before she goes home in order to allow for 48 hours notice before the Tuesday meeting.

Jeff McKinney then raised his hand and stated he would like to invite Oakley to ask him questions any time about operations.

Oakley stated she did go up to the tower and speak with McKinney.

McKinney said she was mistaken about the conversation they had had. He also stated the parts to repair the valve that was held open with the vice grips showed up today.

Update Handbook and Job Descriptions

The Council scheduled a special meeting for November 18 at 9 a.m. to update handbook and job descriptions. The meeting will be immediately followed by a closed Executive Session to update personnel files.

Volunteer Park Restrooms

Myers stated it has been suggested that since hunting season is nearly over, two of the Volunteer Park bathrooms be locked, with one left open for the rest of winter.

Stellman asked about Snowmobile Club events. Clarke suggested leaving one of the front bathrooms open and opening up the second one for special events such as the Christmas Parade and Poker Run.

Esposito asked who will take care of the restrooms since the Parks Manager position has finished. Myers stated the City will need to put out an advertisement for a volunteer.

Employee Vacation Schedule

Oakley said vacation hours need to be taken before the service date or will be lost. She said she spoke to individuals who could help cover so McKinney and McKinney could take time off together

while family is in town, if wanted.

Jeff McKinney stated they will decide their vacation dates and let Council know and that Council will not dictate their vacation dates.

Jeff McKinney said he has taken initial steps to have a part-time temporary assistant with experience to come in and cover for him while out. Julie McKinney said she had a resume for LeAnne Woolf to fill in for her and that was her choice for a replacement.

Armbruster asked if Kathi (Vinson) could fill in.

Julie stated that Vinson does not work full-time for the City and has other jobs. Myers clarified that Vinson said she would fill in the occasional day when she can to minimize the need for outside help.

Oakley stated that Toni (Thompson) would also be available and has experience as City Recorder.

Myers stated he would abstain from any decision due to his relationship to Myers.

Armbruster stated he was not willing to make a motion or a decision at this time on this topic.

Myers said the Council has not selected Jeff McKinney's assistants at a City Council meeting, and suggested they could probably follow the same process with the Recorder. Armbruster concurred with, "Go with God."

Public Input

Myers, Armbruster, Oakley, and Esposito will attend the November 12 Mayor's Council meeting in Richland.

Clarke asked about approval to take the truck in for brake work. Myers stated as far as he is concerned, "Maintenance is something we do, especially with fire vehicles."

Armbruster agreed and said something to the effect of brakes being important.

Myers thanked Sheriff Ash for attending and the meeting adjourned.

Wolves delisted

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 1

Press release from
ODFW:

About 106 people came to testify, limited to three minutes each.

Commissioners thanked the public for coming to testify and asked that interests on both sides of the issue continue to work with each other.

Chair Finley noted the many people "some in cowboy hats and others in T-shirts supporting wolves" who came out to testify on opposite sides of the issue because they care about wolves. "The Wolf Plan has been working well and you are all responsible for that," he told the public still in the meeting at the end of the day. With the Commission's decision made, the rule will be filed with the Secretary of State tomorrow, Nov. 10. The filing removes wolves from the state ESA but has no other effect on wolf management at this time.

The Wolf Plan continues to provide protection of wolves into the future. Any take of wolves is tightly

regulated in all phases of the plan. Non-lethal preventive measures to prevent wolf-livestock conflict are the first choice of wildlife managers in all phases of wolf management. There is no general season sport hunting of wolves allowed in any phase of the Wolf Plan. Wolves in western Oregon will continue to be managed with ESA-like protections until they reach the conservation objective of four breeding pairs for three consecutive years. This is known as Phase 1 of wolf management.

Additionally, west of Hwys 395-78-95 wolves are also still listed under the federal Endangered Species Act and the Commission's action has no effect on their federal status. Wolves in eastern Oregon moved to Phase 2 of management earlier this year.

They will move to Phase 3 after ODFW documents seven breeding pairs for three consecutive years, which could occur as early as January 2017. In Phase 3 while wolves are delisted, controlled take of wolves in situations

of chronic depredation or wolf-related declines of prey populations is allowed with approval.

The vote was not unanimous. Commissioner Greg Wolley voted not to delist while Commissioner Laura Anderson supported delisting only in the eastern part of the state and voted against the motion.

Other Commissioners also expressed support for delisting in eastern Oregon only. However, they noted that Oregon ESA law does not allow for delisting in only a portion of the state. Commissioners will be sending a note to the Oregon State Legislature asking that the law be changed so that listing and delisting would be allowed in only a portion of the state for other species in the future.

Commissioners also asked that penalties for unlawfully taking a wolf be increased. Currently, the maximum penalty is a \$6,250 fine and a year in jail and that penalty does not change with the delisting of wolves.

The next Commission meeting is Dec. 4 in Portland.

Saint Alphonsus Foundation—Baker City
Invites you to . . .

Festival of Trees 2015

Preview Among The Trees

Thursday, December 3, 2015

6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$15 per person

Hors d'oeuvres

No-host Bar

Silent Auction

Gala

Friday, December 4, 2015

5:30 p.m.—11:00 p.m.

Cocktails 5:30 p.m. ~ Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$55 per person

Buffet Sit Down Dinner

No-host Bar

Silent & Live Auction

Following the auction, dance to the live music of "Colorblind"

Events are held at the Baker County Event Center—2600 East Street Baker City, Oregon

☞ Tickets Available at Betty's Books, The Sycamore Tree and Saint Alphonsus Medical Center—Baker City

Family Day—Saturday, December 5, 2015
Viewing of the Trees

"Make It, Take It" ~ Sponsored by Crossroads Art Center
Photos with Santa ~ Sponsored by Baker City Kiwanis

For more information contact
Laura Huggins at 541-523-8102.

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