

# La Grande Evening Observer

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## City Manager's Report for the Year 1921 Shows Work Done to Improve City During the Year

The annual report of the city manager for the year 1921 was recently published by the city commission, some delay having been caused in having the report published because the city manager of last year, George Garrett, is now located in Grand Junction, Colorado.

The report lists the assets of the city at \$600,156.22 with a bonded indebtedness of \$213,000, these figures being as of December 31, 1921. In addition to the bonded indebtedness of the city there are improvement bonds in the amount of \$95,027.03 standing out, according to the report.

The treasurer's report to the manager showed that the cash on hand the first of the year was \$15,073.32 and that the receipts for the year were \$181,326.01.

In calling attention to the progress made in finance during that period in which the commission-manager form of government has been effective in La Grande, Mr. Garrett says, in his report:

"The city tax levies have decreased from 18.5 mills in 1913 and 1915 to 11.8 mills in 1920 and although the levy of 1921 is 12.3 mills the amount of money raised from this levy is practically the same as from the 11.8 mill levy of 1920. The increase in the levy being due to the decrease in the assessed valuation.

"It is also well to remember that during the years 1913 to 1915 a large amount of revenue for city purposes was derived from saloon licenses, and that prices of labor and material were considerably less than in 1920 and 1921.

"All General Warrants outstanding were called for payment at the end of the year but owing to the fact that some people holding these warrants did not turn them in soon enough there were warrants to the amount of \$2,401.75 still unpaid on December 31st. However, this is the lowest amount of outstanding warrants at the end of the year for many years.

In 1919 the amount outstanding was \$10,390.62, and in 1920 \$15,454.10.

"Owing to the fact that during the past two years work requiring large expenditures of money has been performed just previous to the receipt of the taxes, considerable money has been saved in interest on outstanding warrants. The amount of interest paid on general warrants in 1919 was \$3,168.26; in 1920 was \$1,586.48; and in 1921 was but \$1,260.68."

The fire department during the year covered 56 calls. The loss by fire during the year was \$2,849.94 on buildings and \$4,995.83 on contents. The amount of insurance paid was \$7,165.20.

The police department report shows that the number of arrests made during the year were less than the previous year. In commenting on the work of the police, Mr. Garrett said:

"Although the number of arrests made this year by the members of the Police Department were only 502 as against 454 last year and the amount of fines and forfeits only \$3,022.50 as against \$4,995.83 last year, I believe the moral condition of the city is much better, which is no doubt due to the continuance of the policy adopted by the present Chief of the Department. Which is, 'Fearless enforcement of the law with favors to none and courteous treatment to all.'"

Bootleggers and other liquor law violators were arrested in larger numbers than the year previous, which called forth the following comment from Mr. Garrett in his report:

"Although sorry to relate, the number of arrests for drunkenness have increased from 69 in 1919 to 80 in 1920 to 100 in 1921. Seven men and two women were arrested for bootlegging in the city and Union county by the police officers and nine were convicted, and yet they seem to ply their trade as actively as ever. What, then, is the explanation? The tendency of the courts to assess nominal fines instead of jail sentences of six months or a year and the continual weakening of the prohibition laws by the various judges of the higher courts which tend to make the apprehension of the bootleggers more difficult each year are the principal reasons why the number of cases of drunkenness are increasing. The conditions are not local but are general all over the United States."

In regard to the work of other departments the report says:

"During the past year the Engineering Department has performed considerable work, the greater part of which has consisted of the re-survey of the city which at the end of the year was about sixty-five per cent completed.

"Preliminary plans, estimates of

cost and assessments were made for five different improvement districts, but owing to the fact that the charter amendment which was submitted to the voters at a special election held in the month of August, which would have enabled the city to sell its improvement bonds at or near par failed to pass made necessary the indefinite postponement of these improvements. The market price for improvement bonds that could have been issued under the present charter provisions was such that they could not be sold for more than 85 per cent.

"Line and grade stakes were set for 2,485 feet of cement sidewalk during the year. These sidewalks being laid by the property owners or contractors employed by them individually.

"Considerable work was performed in making surveys and setting line and grade stakes for the grading of sub-grade of S avenue from Fir street to Spruce street and of Spruce street from S avenue to the North city limits, which is to be dedicated as 'Victory Way,' as a memorial to the World War veterans of Union county. The grading was started on this project in November but on account of weather conditions only a small amount of the work was performed. The same will be completed, however, as soon as weather conditions in the spring will permit.

"This was the first year for many years that the Palmer Lumber company has not been called upon to pump water for the city. In fact, they have pumped water but four days (upon orders) since June 1st, 1920, to December 31st, 1921. While during the year 1919 they pumped 76 days, which, at the rate charged the city for such pumping in 1920, which was \$36.00 per day, would amount to \$2,736.00 per year. Considerable money has thereby been saved during the past two years.

"The work at the city pumping plant was completed this year by the construction of a concrete screen basin valve basin and bulkhead, the laying of steel pipe between these structures, and the installation of the necessary valves, screens, etc. It will now be possible to pump water from the river in cases of emergency. However, the pumping equipment has a capacity of only 750,000 gallons per day, whereas the city requires from 1,000,000 gallons to 1,400,000 gallons per day, and therefore it is advisable to construct another unit of 1,000,000 gallons capacity as soon as the city's finances will permit.

"Some repair work was done on the Beaver Creek supply line this year, consisting of strengthening the spillway at the storage lake, rebuilding bridges over Beaver Creek and Dry Jordan Creek, removing stumps, trees and other obstructions in the creek above the intake. Eighty-one leaks were stopped in the pipeline between the intake and the city reservoirs.

"One hundred sixteen leaks were stopped in the water mains within the city limits during the year. It will soon be absolutely necessary to replace considerable wood pipe mains in the city. This should be done as soon as possible and especially before any of the streets are paved.

"Many shut-off valves have been located during the past year which were not shown on the map of the water system, principally by the use of a magnetic dipping needle which was purchased in July, 1921. The locations of all shut-off valves as well as all service connections and meters that have been placed during the past two years have been accurately plotted on the city water maps for future reference.

"Provision has been made in the budget for 1922 for re-lining the local reservoir with concrete, which, when completed, will save many thousands of gallons from being wasted as has been the case for several years.

"Provision has also been made for making extensive repairs to the Beaver Creek pipe line but considerable more money will be necessary to keep this line in good repair for the next few years.

"During the past year the macadam pavements on Adams avenue, Harrison avenue and Island avenue have been scarified, regraded and rolled, but owing to the fact that no stone screenings could be obtained when Island avenue was resurfaced this pavement has since ravelled out considerably. As this street as well as Adams avenue, carries considerable automobile traffic it is advisable that the same be paved as soon as possible, thereby saving considerable money in maintenance charges.

"Several iron and concrete traffic

standards were constructed and installed in place of the old wooden ones. These standards are not only very light but have cost less to maintain than the wooden ones. After careless drivers have collided with one once they are more careful to avoid them in the future, and therefore traffic conditions have been greatly improved since the installation of the new standards.

"Chlorine apparatus was installed at the Septic Tank last summer to treat the effluent from the septic tank, and since that time no more threats of lawsuits have been made by the irrigation company into whose ditch this effluent is emptied.

"Many roots and other obstructions have been removed from the sanitary sewers in various parts of the city.

"The flood condition at the intersection of Adams avenue and Depot street which has prevailed after every rainstorm for several years was eliminated. The cost of cleaning was greatly reduced this year by the use of a whistling nozzle which was purchased in the early part of the year."

The report of the public library shows that 38,214 volumes were loaned during the year and that the gain over the previous year was 7,426. One person in every four in the city took out a library card. The cost of the library was 77 cents per inhabitant and the cost of circulating each book was 14 cents—one cent less than the previous year.

"For the guidance of those interested in civic affairs Mr. Garrett outlined a tentative municipal program. Among the important matters dealt with are the following, with its suggestions as to the best manner of handling them:

**Street Improvement.**

"During the year 1921 preliminary surveys and estimates were made for the improvement of several streets in the city but owing to the fact that contractors refused to bid on the work unless they were guaranteed cash payments such improvements were postponed indefinitely. The reason for this being that at the time present the Charter provides that the contractor shall accept improvement bonds at par in payment for his work. These bonds would not bring more than 85 per cent and even at that price the market is very poor.

"In August, 1921, an amendment to the city charter providing that no improvement bonds should be general obligations of the city was presented to the voters at a special election and owing to the fact that few people understood the nature of this amendment it was defeated. Had this amendment passed it would have been possible to sell City of La Grande improvement bonds at or very near par and would have enabled the city to provide for many needed improvements. However, it is well that such has been the case as it is folly to pave streets unless necessary storm sewers and catch iron water mains have been laid previously. This amendment should be re-submitted to the voters at the general election to be held in November, 1922."

**Re-Survey.**

"Shortly after the August election a re-survey of the city was started. This re-survey provides for the ex-

location of all street lines, for the placing of monuments in the street intersections, thereby making it very easy to make surveys of private lots or property or for the improvement of any street without great cost for preliminary surveys. This work was not completed in 1921 but will be completed in the early part of 1922. Upon the completion of this survey a new map of the city will be made and all houses of the city renumbered in accordance with the best modern system.

**Civic Center.**

"A suitable location should be obtained on which to create a civic center and build thereon a new city hall and possibly an auditorium and provide sufficient space for holding band concerts during the summer months. Provision should also be made in the civic center for a site upon which to locate a new court house as it will be possible to sell the present city hall for a sum of money greater than its original cost, and as it is or soon will be inadequate to serve its present purpose. A new city hall will soon be needed as the present structure is too small to adequately care of the offices of the city administration and the fire and police departments. The citizens of La Grande are very desirous of securing a new railroad depot and they are justified in demanding the construction of the same in the very near future as the present structure is very inadequate to take care of the needs of a city the size of La Grande. It would therefore seem advisable when selecting a site for the civic center to select a site which would also include a site for the proposed new depot so that it might become a part of the civic center."

**Water Supply.**

"Early in the Spring of 1921 Stevens and Koon, consulting engineers of Portland, Oregon, were employed to make reconnaissance surveys of all available sources of water supply for the City of La Grande. After they had made these reconnaissance surveys it was definitely decided that what has been known as the Lower Beaver Creek project was the logical future water supply for the city and they were ordered to make preliminary plans and estimates of the cost of same. After they had completed this work and made their report the commission decided that the cost which was estimated at approximately \$500,000.00, was more than the citizens of La Grande would care to spend at this time for a water supply system, and thereupon ordered the engineers to make a complete investigation of the present Beaver Creek supply system as well as the distribution system of the city. After making a thorough investigation they submitted their report.

"After due consideration of this report the Commission decided to call a special election on November 2nd to vote upon the issuing of \$204,000.00 to perform the work recommended with the execution of the construction of a new local reservoir. For several weeks previous to this election considerable effort was spent in advertising this election and explaining to the citizens the details of the proposed improvement as well as the condition of the present water system.

"Out of a total of 2,760 registered voters only 828 cast their votes at this election, which resulted in the defeat of the bond issue by 68 votes. The result of the election was very disappointing to the City Commission inasmuch as they had spent many months trying to solve the water problem and believing that the solution that they had made was the to the best interests of the city. However,

"With the exception of the passenger depot it is not proposed that the other buildings mentioned above should be constructed before the year 1927, but if the population of La Grande increases during the next ten years as rapidly as it has during the past ten years the value of the land that is required for a suitable civic center will be more than doubled. Therefore, it seems advisable that the site for the civic center be purchased as soon as possible.

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### Scenic Highway

"Provision has been made in the budget for 1922 for the purchase of the necessary right-of-way and construction of what is known as the Scenic Highway, or Hillside Drive, which will traverse the hills in the northwest part of the city from a point a few hundred feet west of the Oro Dell bridge to the intersection of Adams avenue and Alder street.

"It is advisable to secure the necessary right-of-way as soon as possible either by direct purchase or by condemnation proceedings but preferably the former.

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The Commission have not laid down on the job but have planned to use every possible effort to furnish an adequate supply of water with the present system, making what necessary repairs can be made with the funds available. However, funds must be provided in the very near future to build a water supply system that will supply the city with an adequate supply of water at all times."

A table showing the per capita tax for many cities in the state is appended, which shows that La Grande's per capita tax for city purposes has decreased from 11.89 in 1913 to 8.86 in 1921. In many other cities there has been a big increase.

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL SCHOOL MEETING.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO the legal voters of School District No. 1, of Union County, State of Oregon,

that the ANNUAL SCHOOL MEETING of said District will be held at the Central School Building; to begin at the hour of two o'clock p. m. and until the hour of seven o'clock p. m. on the third Monday of June, being the 19th day of June, A. D., 1922.

This meeting is called for the purpose of electing one Director for the term of three years and the transaction of business usual at such meeting.

Dated this 3rd day of June, 1922.  
J. A. RUSSELL,  
Chairman Board of Directors.  
Attest: Chas. H. REYNOLDS,  
District Clerk.

June 3-7-10-12-16

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