

# Opinion / Local

## City gets clean audit report, makes appointments

By Gina K. Swartz

Gina@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Tuesday night the City Council met at 6:30 p.m., before the 7:00 p.m. regular session, for an executive session.

The regular meeting began right on time at 7:00 p.m., being called to order by Mayor Mosier with all councilors present.

The Council's first order of business was to approve minutes for the previous regular meeting held on January 13, 2015. It was noted by City Recorder Luke Yeaton that a couple wording errors had been discovered and changed in those minutes. It was moved by Councilor Downing with a second by Councilor Merrill to approve those minutes. Unanimously, the Council agreed to approve the minutes.

Mayor Mosier opened the floor to any citizen participation of which there was none.

Council next attended to filling one open position on the Planning Commission. There was only one applicant for the one open position, Brandy Bruce. Bruce was unanimously appointed to serve.

Mayor Mosier next addressed the appointment of council members to serve on various boards and commissions. "I have heard from three councilors interested in positions on those committees. Councilor Langrell has stepped forward for the Economic Development Commission, Councilor Thomas has expressed interest in the Public Works Advisory Commission, and Councilor Augenfeld has stepped forward to fill the seat on the Public Arts Commission," Mosier said.

She then verified that no other councilors were interested in those seats and expressed that there

are other committees and options for service that councilors can be involved with that come up often. Langrell, Thomas and Augenfeld were appointed to the committees they had expressed interest in.

City Manager Mike Kee added, "If a councilor's got an interest in one of these things, as long as we don't have over three councilors meeting together it is not a public meeting. You are more than welcome to attend meetings, watch and see what we are doing and give your input."

Next on the agenda was approval of financial statements for the City. Bob Seymour of Guyer and Associates, which conducted the yearly audit of the City's financials, addressed the Council. "I'd be willing to talk all night about this stuff if you want, but I am sure you don't want me to so I will keep my comments brief. If you have any questions I encourage you to ask. I want to highlight that the City was debt-free for sometime in July of 2013 through just past the end of the fiscal year (June 2014) and that is a very rare occurrence to have no debt to outside parties. But unfortunately you had a UV treatment plant that you needed to build and so there is now debt on that. But I thought that to be debt-free was a very notable accomplishment."

Seymour advised the council that the auditors do a risk assessment to see where likelihood of error or fraud is based on years prior numbers and expectations. Anything outside of expectations is audited more thoroughly.

Seymour stated that his opinion was a "clean opinion" of the financial records. "That's the best you can get out of an auditor."

Mayor Mosier questioned Seymour about an

incident involving two checks.

Seymour responded by telling council, "What happened in this particular case was that the check stock that came from the bank had two blank checks in it. When they went for signature there was nothing on them so they threw them away leaving a gap in check numbers that were unaccounted for. Luckily, it happened early enough in the year those involved were able to remember what happened. We have made the recommendation that if something weird like that happens, keep those and mark them as void and keep them in a voided check file."

The council voted to unanimously approve the City's financial report. The City's full financial report is available on the website [bakercity.com](http://bakercity.com).

Kee addressed the Council regarding information provided by the coalition to revitalize Main Street and restore Oregon about proposed legislation to give tax credits to those that rehabilitate historic buildings.

There is potential to create as many as 1,300 jobs.

Council is being asked to write a letter in support for Representative Benz and Senator Ferrioli. "There is quite a bit of information so I wanted you to have it then we will add it to the next agenda," said Kee.

Council also set a date for a goal setting special meeting for March 21, 2015 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Before ending the meeting councilor Downing recognized the Baker City Police Department for the strides made with recent drug arrests. "That was a big job with a lot of people involved, a lot of hours spent. Very well done and very professional."

Electromagnetic Pulses, and had no idea that North Korea is currently trying to put the finishing touches on that technology for use as a weapon.

We suppose ignorance is bliss, but we also wonder what happened to the good old-fashioned desire for independence and self-sufficiency. For basic survival even!

Parables such as the one about the ant and the grasshopper come to mind as do cliches like "better safe than sorry."

There are situations that could arise at any time without warning—anything from a natural disaster to an economic depression to war. These things have happened since the beginning of civilization, and based on that fact, will happen again.

So when acts as simple as storing food, water, medical supplies, fuel, ammunition and the like could be the difference between life and death for your family, why would these things be viewed as "fringe" activities about which to joke?

Stop and think about it for a minute. Then become the ant.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

### — EDITORIAL —

## Being prepared is no joke

We receive steady press releases from the State's office of emergency management, and cover our County's monthly Oath Keepers meetings, receiving the low-down from our local emergency management team there. So when we posted on Facebook a preparedness alert about efforts to plan ahead for the next big Oregon earthquake, it caught us off our guard to see that some, despite the science, either didn't believe earthquakes can happen in our State, or thought the whole idea of preparing for one was a joke.

We happened to get similar feedback from a different venue—from a reader of a preparedness booklet we publish who both disbelieved the scientific effects of

**Letter to the Editor Policy:** The Baker County Press reserves the right not to publish letters containing factual falsehoods or incoherent narrative. Letters promoting or detracting from specific for-profit businesses will not be published. Word limit is 375 words per letter. Letters are limited to one every other week per author. Letters should be submitted to [Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com](mailto:Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com).

**Advertising and Opinion Page Disclaimer:** Opinions submitted as Guest

Opinions or Letters to the Editor express the opinions of their authors, and have not been authored by and are not necessarily the opinions of The Baker County Press, any of our staff, management, independent contractors or affiliates. Advertisements placed by political groups, candidates, businesses, etc., are printed as a paid service, which does not constitute an endorsement of or fulfillment obligation by this newspaper for the products or services advertised.

### — GUEST OPINION —

## Superbowl: stakes high

By Melissa Grammon

Super Bowl XLIX is upon us, and millions of Americans will be cheering on the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots. Fans have been waiting all season to see their teams reach the big game and the stakes are high in more ways than one.

USA Today estimates \$12 billion was bet on the Super Bowl last year. Super Bowl wagering reaches such a fever pitch that folks bet not only on the game, but on things like who will sing the National Anthem, what color clothing they will wear, how long they will hold the note on the word "free" etc. For most people it's really just a way to have some fun, but for the thousands of Oregonians who are problem gamblers, the Super Bowl stakes are much higher.

Many people aren't aware that gambling can become just as addictive as substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; and events like the Super Bowl can serve as "triggers" for those with gambling problems.

This concerns not only problem gamblers, who may see betting on the Super Bowl as a last hope to recoup their losses from wagering on the season, but youth as well. Thirty percent of youth in Baker County have self-reported as gambling in the past 30 days and those who have gambled are more likely to engage in other risky behaviors as well, such as binge drinking and using tobacco.

It's something we need to pay attention to and address. Parents can use this event as a teachable moment to talk to their

kids about the fact that gambling can become addictive. There are great resources for kids and parents at [www.problemgamblingprevention.org](http://www.problemgamblingprevention.org).

In Baker County, it's estimated that there are over 400 adult problem gamblers. Since each problem gambler affects 6-10 people around them, the impact in our small community can ripple out quickly. How to know if someone has a gambling problem:

- They are often preoccupied with gambling.
- They bet more money and more frequently.
- They lie about the money and time they spend gambling.
- They often chase their losses by betting more in a futile attempt to regain the money they've lost.

If you or someone you care about is putting too much at stake with their gambling, free and confidential help is available by calling 1-877-mylimit or by going to [1877mylimit.org](http://1877mylimit.org). Help is also available from problem gambling counselors at New Directions Behavioral Health and Wellness at 541-523-3646.

Are you a family member of a problem gambler? You too can get help with or without the direct involvement of the gambler.



Submitted Photo

Melissa Grammon is the Prevention Coordinator for Baker County and works at New Directions Northwest.

### — LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

#### Tired of being force-fed by USFS

To the Editor:

Countless people in Eastern Oregon are consumed by the forest plan or the travel plan that is being force-fed us by the USFS. We spend part of every single day living the possible impact of losing our access and open forest system. Impact, negative impact on economy, health and welfare, carry over to every aspect of our personal lives. We don't need a graph to know we are tied historically and presently to our public lands.

At the moment we are being fed, "strategy." As always I associate a change in terminology and new words with an individual's possible advancement in the agency. The dictionary tells me, "strategy," the science of planning and directing military operations. Esp, using stratagems.

Okay what is "stratagems?" Back to my dog-eared ancient dictionary. "Stratagem" 1. a trick plan for deceiving an enemy in war—2. Any tricky ruse. I'm not saying the choice of words was intentional, maybe a poor choice at best. I can point to a few, but not all the stratagems, "this plan doesn't close roads," "this project doesn't close roads," all the while closures are hidden and buried behind vocabulary such as "desired condi-

tions," "habitat," "reclamation," "restoration," "collaborative," or "partnerships." Looking at the invitations to the "strategy meeting" would leave most reasonable people wondering. To my knowledge every representative except FAFA, is willing to let our roads and open forest be negotiated away without a thought, or consideration of our previous losses. The Travel Management Plan, was strongly opposed, resulting in the Record of Decision, being withdrawn. Now we have the Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision, that has met with overwhelming negative reviews. Presently eleven counties have voiced opposition to the forest plan, accompanied by over 1,000 submitted comments that are 95% against the plan. The message is very clear, but I guess the volume is set to low for the forest service to hear.

These plans generate employment for an agency that has lost all credibility with the public.

Who is in charge? The condition of our vast forest resources are in deplorable condition and will continue to decline if the present mentality of managing people takes priority over healthy forests. I'm offering a strategy," cut funding to this top heavy agency."

Wanda Ballard  
Baker City

### — CONTACT US —

#### The Baker County Press

PO Box 567  
Baker City, Ore. 97814

Open Monday-Thursday for calls  
9 AM - 4 PM  
Open 24/7 for emails  
Office location: TBA

Phone: 541.519.0572

[TheBakerCountyPress.com](http://TheBakerCountyPress.com)

Kerry McQuisten, Publisher  
[Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com](mailto:Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com)

Wendee Morrissey, Advertising and Sales  
[Wendee@TheBakerCountyPress.com](mailto:Wendee@TheBakerCountyPress.com)

David Conn, Advertising and Sales  
[David@TheBakerCountyPress.com](mailto:David@TheBakerCountyPress.com)

Published weekly every Friday.  
Subscription rates per year are \$29.95 all areas, e-mail delivery. \$39.95 print issue, home delivery, Baker City city limits only. \$49.95 print issue, mail delivery, outside Baker City city limits only.  
Payment in advance.

A division of  
Black Lyon Publishing, LLC

Copyright © 2014

#### YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

##### President Barack Obama

202.456.1414  
202.456.2461 fax

[Whitehouse.gov/contact](http://Whitehouse.gov/contact)

##### US Sen. Jeff Merkley

503.326.3386  
503.326.2900 fax

[Merkley.Senate.gov](http://Merkley.Senate.gov)

##### US Sen. Ron Wyden

541.962.7691

[Wyden.Senate.gov](http://Wyden.Senate.gov)

##### US Rep. Greg Walden

541.624.2400  
541.624.2402 fax

[Walden.House.gov](http://Walden.House.gov)

##### Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber

503.378.3111

[Governor.Oregon.gov](http://Governor.Oregon.gov)

##### State Rep. Cliff Bentz

503.986.1460

##### State Sen. Ted Ferrioli

541.490.6528

##### Baker County Commissioners Bill Harvey; Mark Bennett; Tim Kerns

541.523.8200  
541.523.8201