

Local

Sumpter City Council has full agenda while mayor faces recall

• VOLUNTEER PARK RESTROOMS VANDALIZED

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Sumpter's City Council met Tuesday night at City Hall.

Mayor Melissa Findley opened the meeting by reminding everyone that the proceedings were being recorded and invited all to stand and join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of June's meeting were approved with a minor adjustment to wording.

After clarifying a couple of the bills, all bills were unanimously approved for payment.

Jeff McKinney, Utility Manager, kicked off his report by reminding folks that water conservation efforts should still be in effect despite the recent rains.

He said the City intake rose 7" over the past week, but who knows how long that will last. He thanked Fergusons for donation of a shop vac and Phillips for oiling the street by the park.

McKinney is rebuilding the metering pump at the treatment plant. The starter on the City truck went out.

McKinney thanked Lee German and Toni for picking up the replacement part and Mark Bork for installing it.

The Volunteer Park restrooms were vandalized with feces and paper towels.

Outside assistance from Baker City Sewer and Drain had to be brought in and McKinney thanked all who helped with that mess.

McKinney gave an update on the street grant and Findley asked him to provide an outline of the proposed improvements.

There was discussion on the merits of paving a portion of road to the Post Office versus using those funds to repair other roads around the City.

McKinney stated he would prefer to do more street improvements.

There is a possibility materials could be obtained cheaper through the County when they start the Granite road project. McKinney stated he will get prices for gravel and materials and bring them to the next meeting.

Kurt Clarke gave his Fire Chief's Report.

Seven people are taking the Firefighter 1 class on Wednesday nights and Saturdays. He estimated about three more Saturdays to finish. He thanked John Young for the time he puts into the class.

Clarke said it has been pretty quiet except for some medical calls. They are geared up for fire, training on suctioning out of creeks.

He thanked the auxiliary and personnel for all they've done and said it would be cool to see a

lot more citizens come through the food booth.

Dan Patton said the Planning Commission has not met, but is going to McEwen Thursday evening for a walkthrough of the primary muster point.

Findley opened her Mayor's Report with information on a visit from OSHA earlier in the day.

OSHA found that the City was not holding and documenting regular safety meetings and there was not a safety triangle on the back of the City quad.

City was fined \$300, reduced to \$100.

Monthly safety training meetings will be initiated. McKinney offered that he has documentation of some previous trainings.

Findley asked that he provide those and put into writing the safety protocols already in place, so that those can be provided to OSHA with the other documentation.

Findley read an office policy sheet on emergency situations and stated that the definition of an emergency needs to be clarified. Does the situation truly affect City citizens as an emergency? She stated a special meeting was called regarding emergency repairs, but as the meeting was called improperly per charter, the meeting was cancelled.

Another policy states that bills will be presented to council for payment. If council does not meet or achieve quorum, the bills will be paid timely, unless questionable.

Findley stated there needs to be more definition in this policy as well, as questionable is open to individual interpretation. She stated she would like to see the City's policy book.

Findley mentioned an issue about campers in Volunteer Park, stating the City is already facing a similar issue in the lawsuit concerning grounds and campers.

She stated caution should be used in giving permission to camp in a Day Use only park.

Council member LeAnn Woolf asked when the park was declared Day Use Only.

Findley recommended that be defined, that everyone do their homework on this, and be prepared to vote next time. She asked that meanwhile, permission not be given to anyone to camp there.

Findley next spoke about two bills received by the City for repairs to showers at the Fairgrounds. She stated that after stopping the initial leak, the situation was not an emergency and should have gone out for bid, as the bills turned in were over \$500.

McKinney disagreed, stating that they kept finding additional leaks, and that the situation was handled and resolved appropriately.

Woolf stated that the facilities are important for the comfort of vendors and

visitors, which help bring revenue into the City.

Findley stated very important is not the same as an emergency.

Findley stated there will be a settlement hearing 8/7 for the lawsuit against the City and the hearing is scheduled for 9/16-9/18. She clarified that the Flea Market committee position that Lori Jean Pruitt served on was not a hired position.

She concluded by thanking Keith Richardson for his \$500 donation to the Fire Department.

Findley reported Park Manager Anna Stafford was unable to attend the meeting due to training, but did provide a written report which was provided to all in attendance.

Vern Hollopeter, who drove the water truck over the Fourth of July Flea Market, reported that the set-up put together using the city snowplow and a water tank worked great.

He suggested either buying the spreader from Kurt Clarke or having one made, putting a 4" cleanout on one end, welding chain to the spreader to help hold the tailgate of the truck up as a diffuser plate, and creating the ability to turn the water valve on and off from inside the truck.

This would improve safety and efficiency and can be accomplished with a ¼ turn ball valve, electric actuator and control box.

McKinney stated the first step in moving forward with this is finding a tank as the one currently in use is on loan from Clarke.

Findley asked Councilperson Oakley to work on locating tanks with the assistance of McKinney.

Findley asked to send the newly updated CenturyLink franchise ordinance to the City attorney before approving and signing. The new agreement will raise the franchise fee from 4% to 7%.

Findley thanked everyone for all the input and response on the SLOT meeting.

They have not yet been able to put them all into order to pick the top five in each category.

Woolf provided an update on the IFA Grant Application for DEQ-mandated sewer field upgrades.

They are chatting with the new representative about how the reduction in the amount that the project is going to cost needs to be reflected in application.

They are also inquiring about funding for the design and specs report that requires hiring an engineer.

Meanwhile, DEQ did grant an extension to the project.

Councilperson Armbruster asked about time-frames and Woolf replied she had hoped to vote on the matter this evening, but the IFA representative has been out of the office for a week.

Council members scheduled an Executive Session for July 23 at 9 a.m..

Findley volunteered to get information on poten-

tial for income from selling the cell tower site as well as another 27-acre piece of City-owned property. Woolf mentioned that the May 2015 issue of focus has the ORS numbers involved in selling property.

Findley sent in an application for a Watershed Management Grant, which could provide \$30,000 for a source water protection plan. If Sumpter is selected, the Council can vote on going forward. Council unanimously approved McKinney to attend a class next month for further development of his water certification.

The next item on the agenda concerned water and sewer rate increases. While City Recorder Julie McKinney made copies of the resolutions for citizens in attendance,

Findley mentioned that she'd forgotten to include something in her report. She stated a petition is circulating to recall her as mayor and explained the process.

A certain percentage of Sumpter registered voters who voted in the last gubernatorial election must sign the petition. It will then be sent to county clerk Cindy Carpenter.

She will review the list and determine the validity of signatures.

If it is determined to be a viable list, the mayor will be given five days to respond or resign. Findley stated, "I will be responding, not resigning."

There will then be 35 days for a vote, and those putting the recall together will have to pay for the special election.

Rate increases on water and sewer were discussed.

Water-rate increases were determined by budget committee per auditor recommendations.

Findley, as well as others in attendance, expressed concern about a \$2 per month increase for residential water rates. She also expressed concern about some of the verbiage in the resolutions.

Jeff McKinney expressed a desire to communicate with other cities regarding policies and sewer rates for RV parks.

Both resolutions were tabled to obtain further information and work on wording.

Findley recommended that Head of Council Toni Thompson write up an addendum in the employee handbook concerning time off and the process, who must be asked, and how the communication should take place.

Council unanimously approved Guyer and Associates' letter of agreement. During the public input portion of the meeting,

Clarke asked if the City received any thanks regarding the bicycle event and was told an e-mail of thanks was received.

Sumpter City Council meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Columbia Basin Helicopters

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The appeal hearing was held on June 8. On June 30, Judge Pahl ruled that under ORS 30.938, the prevailing party, Columbia Basin Helicopters, owned by David McCarty, was entitled to receive payment from Baker County to cover the attorney fees expended by the company in defense of the lawsuit.

The original suit was decided in McCarty's favor on March 6 of this year after nearly five years of involvement in the litigation process.

The County, headed by then-commission chair Fred Warner Jr. and advised by attorney Dan Van Thiel, argued as reported by Brian Addison in the March 20, 2015 issue of *The Baker County Press*, that "though the land use ordinance allows farm use in the Rural Residential zone, the county itself has the ability to enforce and interpret that ordinance. The County however, was unable to show in court that the use of helicopters in farming is not a generally accepted agricultural practice."

Pahl found that McCarty's business activities, such as spraying, coincided with agriculture practices and schedules, and was also in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

Though the amount spend in attorney's fees has thus far been unspecified, Joelleen Lindstrom, a spokesman for the company, has indicated the defense ran close to \$200,000.

High-speed chase

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Lohner said after evaluating the threat of harm, they had an obligation to pursue.

A second police unit, driven by Officer Colton Smith, joined in the chase and was able to apprehend the driver when the Kia suddenly ran out of gas near milepost 327 outside Durkee.

The female passenger was quickly removed from the vehicle—safe, but shaken.

Schulte was charged with Reckless Driving, Reckless Endangering, Eluding an Officer, Driving over 100 miles per hour, Coercion, having an open container—and a DUII.

"The whole thing lasted about 18 minutes," said Lohner.

Sheriff warns against PCH phone scam

The Baker County Sheriff's Office would like to warn residents about a fraud/money scheme that is surfacing in the area.

There have been reports of citizens being contacted by phone and told they have won cars, cash and a multi-million dollar prize from Publisher's Clearing House (PCH).

The very convincing operator informs you (s)he is going to guide you through the very lengthy process and starts by instructing you to send payments to pay for "tax form fees."

Most of the instructions will request you wire or transfer funds to various accounts but they also ask that payments be mailed with cash or checks.

In an effort to gain your trust, once the process begins they will send you funds from various sources for you to deposit into personal accounts, only to be reversed later and leave you with overdraft charges.

The originating phone calls are untraceable and the number they give you to call back, goes to Jamaica which results in extensive long distance phone charges. This scam is very elaborate and has a network of victims spanning all over the United States with individual losses in the thousands.

The Baker County Sheriff's Office is currently investigating an open case with local reports and working with many outside agencies to recover losses.

Although PCH does have legitimate prizes, please consider that if you receive an unsolicited call stating you have won a grand prize or a large amount of money, it is most likely a scam.

Because of the international judicial limitations it is recommended you hang up on these persistent callers but more importantly do not give out any information and especially do not send any form of payment to receive prizes or large amounts of money without first researching and confirming the caller's identity.

Any form of suspicious funds sent to you without knowing the origination should be reported to local law enforcement. More detailed information about this scam can be found at PCH web site.

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