

Local

Sam-O-Swim committee meets

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Tuesday evening the Sam-O-Swim Center Committee met to discuss and review projects.

The first thing the group discussed was the sand filter project update.

Michelle Owen, Public Works Director and City Employee liaison for the committee advised the committee she had presented the committee accepted bid to the City Council and was given approval to accept the bid and move forward with the project.

The company that won the bid, Knorr Systems, whose bid was under the budgeted amount, subcontracts for the work to be done.

Owen advised the committee that the work will be done in the coming weeks.

Next on the agenda was the pool resurfacing proposal discussion.

At the last City Council meeting where Owen was given the approval for the sand filters bid she also was given the green light to open up for bid the resurfacing project.

Bids were to be submitted no later than October 1. Owen brought one specific bid to the committee to look at.

Other bids were way beyond the budgeted amount of \$70,000, therefore the bid to be considered favorable was a bid proposed by Mid-American Pool Renovations, Inc. out of Grandview, Missouri. Mid-American Pool Renovations, Inc. was still slightly over-budget however they were the closest to the budget and after the committee agreed that titling of the training pool, which is not a necessity, be removed from the equation saving \$3,500 the bid was within range.

“So, we are within 10% of the budget,” said Chairman Andrew Bryan. “I think by consensus as a committee we could recommend this to the Council and let them grapple with going over.”

Jerri Wickert, a member of the committee, said, “I think we should as a committee make a recommendation, I make a motion that we accept the bid from Mid-America Pool without the tiling of the little pool.”

Paula Moe, Aquatics Director for Sam-O added, “Then find out from them about the non-skid surface, what they recommend.”

Committee member Noel Scott said, “I would second that motion.”

Before a vote, Owen asked Moe, “As far as their schedule, a proposed schedule of basically the month of November is that going to work for Sam-O Swim?”

Moe answered, “Yes.”

Bryan added, “I would like to see the City and the



L-R: Paula Moe Sam-O aquatics director, Andrew Bryan, Chair Jason Bybee, Jerri Wickert, and Michelle Owen,

Y do a joint press release about this. Something to get across that yes, we know in the short term this is a painful experience but in the long run this is absolutely necessary.”

Owen asked Moe once the resurfacing project is complete and the pool refilled, how long it takes to warm back up to operating temperature.

Moe replied, “About three days.” She indicated she would be available to monitor the warm up. The committee then questioned whether the sand filters could be completed before with Owen stating she would need to contact the company and see if they could get that coordinated. The replacement of the sand filters would need to be completed either before or after the resurfacing project with before being most favorable.

“The sand filters must be done either before or after, they can’t be done during because they need water,” said committee member Jason Bybee.

The committee agreed that it would have been nice if a local company (an Oregon company) could have been chosen for the resurface project but as Owen put it, “not when they are \$10 – 12 thousand more. Budget has been really stressed. I mean you could recommend something like that if you wanted but you’d have to explain why and—”

She left it at that. The committee moved to vote on recommending to City Council the acceptance of Mid-American Pool Renovations, Inc.’s bid. They voted to unanimously recommend that bid be accepted.

“That goes to the Council when?” asked Bryan.

Owen told Bryan she would need to write a staff report and would get it on the agenda for the next meeting that is on the 13th. Moe also expressed concern as far as notifying pool users of the upcoming closure.

It was agreed that until the matter goes before Council and the bid is accepted and awarded nothing definite can be posted.

Moe felt that did not give her much time to notify those users and the

committee made suggestions as to how that may be handled by advising users of the pool that this may happen and when but it was pending City Council action before it was definite.

It was agreed that giving a heads up with a “when I know for definite, you’ll know” approach was the best that could be hoped for at this point.

Owen moved on to information on the Heating System Funding Update.

As for now, Owen has secured some funding to complete this project. She said, “So far we’ve gotten \$25,000 from the Leo Adler Grant, \$25,000 from the City budget, \$10,000 from Sunderland and \$15,000 from Oregon Community Foundations.

“We are anticipating seeing \$28,000 in Oregon Energy Trust savings up \$5,000 from where we were at before because we changed their calculations and benefits to us.

“We have a \$60,000 grant in to Family Ford Foundation; they have acknowledged receipt of our application but they are on a November time frame. They will be calling me with questions, and I’ll need to present to a committee.

“That will still leave us about \$32,000 short.

“We do have one more place to go but I want to wait and see what we receive from the Ford Family Foundation first.

“If we are unsuccessful securing funding we will likely have to wait until July to budget that remaining amount.”

Bryan suggested that communicating with the Ford Family Foundation that the City had formed a citizen committee specific to the pool as important.

“They love to see all the community involvement stuff,” he said.

Owen implied it would be a great idea for Bryan, as chairman of the committee, to attend the board presentation and communicate that with them.

Owen said she would let the committee know when she heard back from them as to when that presentation would be and keep them all updated on progress. Last on the formal

agenda was an update on shower funding.

The committee had agreed that they would use money allocated for the showers to help get the pool resurfaced and had previously mentioned crowd funding as an idea to raise money to accomplish replacement of ailing shower units.

The committee decided the previous idea of crowd funding for this project be tabled for now. The committee concurred that they would approach the city in the next budget cycle for the money to replace the units.

Moe mentioned that the ailing showers were now encountering new issues. “The hot water in the Men’s showers and in the Lifeguard shower does not work if the women are showering,” she said.

Owen acknowledged the problem stating she had been working with members of her department and a consultant from Grant Mechanical in Meridian by phone but so far they have not been able to resolve the issue, however the troubleshooting was ongoing and Owen hoped that one of the ideas would be successful so that the showers, although less than adequate could continue to be functional for now.

Before adjourning, other topics discussed included looking back on pool stats as being useful for the committee, ideas of working with the public arts commission to develop some type of bronze, statue or other art piece outside the Swim Center.

Bryan also talked of a way to start a fund just for Sam-O-Swim Center so that money was in reserve for unexpected repairs etc. that may come up.

He said one way he’d been mulling over was proposing an increase in transient room tax that could be specifically collected and put aside in a fund just for Sam-O.

Wickert agreed with Bryan that this was an idea to explore further as visitors to our community should view things like the pool as an amenity to the community they are visiting.

Police training



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Baker City’s Lieutenant Dustin Newman listens in on a discussion about simmunitions.

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Gablks emphasized, “This is a discussion. We want to know what’s working for you and what’s not.”

DPSST’s full purpose is: “To promote excellence in public safety by delivering quality training and developing and upholding professional standards for police, fire, corrections, parole and probation, and telecommunications personnel, in addition to licensing private security providers and private investigators in Oregon,” according to their mission statement.

Gablks opened with internal housekeeping items, including an overview of the 2015-2017, stressing that the budget had been adopted at the same level, with no reductions in training. The present training programs would “stay whole” he said, with two “dedicated mental health response training” positions in the works to help provide new training in that area for officers. He then highlighted some of the policy option packages that were not accepted by the 2015 legislature, and included various proposed staff additions and training programs.

A list of bills specific to DPSST that passed and would affect, or would have affected the agency had they passed, were also discussed including as a sample:

- House Bill 3388 would have authorized reserve officers sponsored by law enforcement units to pay for training as police both with cash or through their G.I. Bill. This bill died in committee last session. At present, 35-40% of Oregon’s basic recruits are military veterans, said training coordinator Todd Anderson.
- House Bill 3487 changed statute to require that private investigators list their DPSST number in all ads.
- Senate Bill 238 gave “teeth” to an existing law, helping DPSST to deny certain personnel information requests, such as birthdates of law enforcement officers that might compromise their personal identities to theft.

Also mentioned was another interesting point specific to the nature and makeup of Oregon law enforcement:

- Oregon de-certified approximately 100 officers last year, whereas California, for example, with a significantly higher number of officers, did the same for only three. 20-30% of those decertified were chiefs, sheriffs, etc. “The system (in Oregon) is working,” said Gablks. Several attendees commented on the tough standards and high quality control held in Oregon for certification and the desire not to lower those standards.

Among the items not approved were increased training requests in the areas of child abuse investigations, active shooter training, and marijuana—as well as other areas.

Discussion around the table also touched upon the need for highly qualified or “blue chip” applicants in Oregon law enforcement, and emphasized that if an organization pauses or is slow in hiring, those candidates are quickly grabbed by another. The retirement of “baby boomers” is leaving a wide range of career openings in many areas of law enforcement.

Several participants referenced flawed diversity policies in other locations resulting in “applicants that have struggled academically” during training and in performing job duties.

From there, the room touched on one area in which participants were pleased with DPSST’s performance: receiving information and public records requests.

Suggestions for the program then began with one major point being the ongoing discussion between whether firearms training should shift away from a shotgun to carbine focus—or not.

Many, including Lohner, expressed the belief that the 16-week course should be considered for expansion to 22-weeks; however, that expansion would also mean more of a delay before an officer was through training and back on duty. Gablks mentioned that any additional training added to the current 16-week program meant that some areas currently in the program would need cut or minimized. At present, there are no concrete plans to expand to a 22-week program.

Another area that was pointed out involved access to regional training. “Bend is not eastern Oregon,” Lohner said. Including webinars rather than in-person training was one solution presented.

The BCPD’s next officer to attend DPSST’s 16-week training will be Chris Sells, who recently joined the department from neighboring Malheur County in July. Sells comes back to Baker City from Nyssa with local ties—including the fact that his mother and stepfather are co-owners in Lefty’s Taphouse on Broadway.

Lohner said that four local officers have finished the training in the number one spot in the past, putting no pressure on Sells at all.

DPSST’s next stops were scheduled for Bend and Coos Bay, followed by Albany, Newport, Keizer, West-Linn and Beaverton.

Lohner concluded that the academy was “light years” beyond what it had been in the past and said, “We’re pleased with the product we’re getting back.”

East face vegetation plan ready for comments

Due to the collaborative relationship between the Forest Service (USFS), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), and Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), the East Face project provides a tremendous opportunity to apply compatible vegetation and fuels management treatments on federal, adjacent private lands and Oregon Department of

Fish and Wildlife lands. The East Face Vegetation Management project area, in combination with adjacent BLM, State, and private lands, became a pilot project for the National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (CWS) offering opportunities to apply the “all hands, all lands” principles and implement efforts to move the area towards the goals of the CWS. The East

Face Vegetation Management Project Environmental Assessment (EA) documents the analysis of activities proposed on over 47,000 acres of USFS and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

A range of five alternatives was developed. The East Face Vegetation Management Project EA which is now available for a 30-day public comment

period.

This East Face project is subject to the pre-decisional objection process at 36 CFR 218. Only individuals or organizations that submitted specific written comments during a designated opportunity for public participation (scoping or this 30-day public comment period) may object (36 CFR 218.5).