

Local

City Council

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Appoint Volunteers to Boards and Commissions

A. Historic District Design Review Commission – two positions are open. Jo Marlette and Phyllis Badgely have applied. Both have been serving however those terms are expiring. New terms are for three years expiring in 2019. Councilor Lewis moved to approve the appointments with a second by Councilor Abell. Council unanimously appoint Badgely and Marlette.

B. Planning Commission – There are currently three vacancies.

Terms are four years for this commission expiring at the end of 2020. Tim Collins and Aaron Still are seeking reappointment, currently serving on the Commission. Councilor Downing moved to appoint with a second by Councilor Lowe. Appointment by Council was unanimous.

C. Airport Commission – three vacancies are on this commission. Mark Berthelsen and Greg Sackos, both currently serving with terms set to expire have requested reappointment. New four-year terms will expire in 2020. Councilor Downing moved to approve the reappointments with a second by Councilor Lewis. A unanimous vote was cast by Council.

D. Public Works Advisory Committee – two vacancies are available, one however is partial due to Milo Pope's resignation. Jim Bruce and Keith Magnuson applied to fill those two vacancies with neither expressing interest as to whether they wished to fill the partial or whole term vacancy. Councilor Lowe moved to approve with a second by Councilor Lewis. Council voted to appoint both Magnuson and Bruce allowing for the two to work it out and decide who would take which term.

E. Parks and Recreation Board – one partial vacancy is open expiring in July 2017. Mark Bogart has applied for that position. Councilor Downing moved for that approval with a second by Councilor Abell. A unanimous vote was cast in favor of appointing Bogart.

F. Budget Board – four vacancies are available. Jeff Petry, Debi Bainter, Ryan Chaves and Andrew Bryan have applied to fill those vacancies.

A question of whether Bryan could be appointed since he serves as chairman of the Sam-O Swim committee was raised to which City Recorder/Human Resources Manager Luke Yeaton said there was not a conflict in this case.

Councilor Lewis moved to appoint all four with a second by Councilor Thomas. A unanimous vote appoints all to the Board.

"I want to thank that long list of citizens that have come forward to fill those spots. It warms my heart to see how few vacancies there are. It tells me that Citizen participation is high, people feel good and comfortable about coming forward to serve. Thank you," said Mayor Mosier.

Council Appointment

to the Public Arts Commission

City Manager Kee advised Council the Rosemary Abell has expressed interest in serving as Council representative on the commission.

Mosier moved to approve her appointment with a second by Councilor Downing, all Councilors voted in favor.

Police Department Update

Chief Wyn Lohner addressed council advising that he would be giving an update on some of the "volunteer programs we have working in the City. Then after that we have Capa here today who brought his handler. We are going to have a little ceremony for him and then do a little demonstration and see who gets to go to jail tonight."

He laughed. He began by explaining the Chaplin program that he created before he was chief as second in command at the department.

He stressed the value of programs to take care of the personnel working for the department, noting that those in law enforcement have a higher suicide rate, domestic violence—"all the negative categories that are out there, cops do it at twice as much as in the normal sector," he said.

He says they also use psychologists in the Portland area who specialize in police work, but the Chaplain program is an easy local way for his staff to just have casual conversations with clergy, often helping to relieve stressor that they encounter.

They partner with four local church organizations, but the program is headed up by Scott Knox. He is in every week to just "hang out" and talk about serious issues if needed or just "shoot the breeze."

Lohner said, "They do go with us on death notifications as well; it is mandatory. I can tell you from experience there is nothing harder than telling a parent that their kid is not coming home the next day and having a Chaplain with you can kinda make that somewhat tolerable."

He also spoke about the COP (citizens on patrol) program, an all-volunteer program that was developed in 2011.

More volunteers are always welcome and encouraged. Lohner has a long-term vision for the program but needs it to grow before it can be fully utilized as he sees it.

He said there is a good core crew already overseen by Edie Richardson and Marlene Rodgers who oversee the program. COP's currently can be seen walking the Leo Adler parkway and provide presence at other community events.

Lohner spoke at length about the reserve program he developed.

For years he said he was opposed to doing this because of the lack of training available but has since combined with surrounding counties creating a regional network to create an extraordinary program.

He says they have trained not only reserves, who are not necessarily always wanting a full-time career in law enforcement but simply want serve as back up "to supplement, compliment and add a greater level of service to our community" for full-time officers.

They often bring in COP volunteers, dispatchers, and even serve as refresher courses for officers. All training hours are DPSST-accredited hours.

According to Lohner, these reserves can be seen at community events such as the motorcycle rally, riding along with officers and have been called in to assist in lower level situations that can free up an officer to get back to higher level incidents.

Lohner noted one such reserve has completed over 700 hours of work and attested to how valuable reserves can be.

Lohner also recognized Jerry Boyd, Commander for Baker City reserves and coordinator of the Eastern Oregon Reserve Academy.

Boyd has over 40 years with law enforcement and "a very diverse background and is someone that I look up to, someone that I ask questions, someone I have a great deal of respect for," he said.

Lohner then had Capa and his handler, Officer Coleton Smith, come into the Council Chambers.

The two-year-old German Shephard - Belgium Malinois cross who is as Lohner stated, "the community's police dog, not the Department police dog because it was the Baker City Community and some other folks that raised the money to put this dog in our car."

Capa was awarded a badge donated by Billie Jo Deal, a Baker City resident who sees Capa regularly as an employee of the Oregon Department of Transportation.

So now Capa is a real police officer with a real badge that has his name on it.

It was a proud moment. Smith then gave a demonstration with Capa locating a methamphetamine scented item that had been placed under the table where City Manager Mike Kee was sitting.

Lohner jokingly began handcuffing Kee.

He then explained that in Capa's training they use toys scented with specific drugs.

So Capa is not really looking for drugs, he's looking for toys.

The item that he located under the table had simply been placed in the city evidence room near some methamphetamine residue, not directly scented with the drug—that is how sensitive his nose is.

Councilman Thomas asked about armor for the dog and was told that they do not deploy the dog in a situation until the danger was neutralized so that his risk of injury was minimal; therefore, the need for armor was not crucial.

Councilor Lewis asked about donations, to which Lohner said they continued to accept donations and they had a line in the city budget for these donations specifically with the remaining balances rolling over every year.

He mentioned how "proud of this community I am, this program has been run almost exclusively on donations for the last five or six years," also noting the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally has been a large contributor over the years.

Consideration of a Railroad Quiet Zone

Mike Kee introduced the item to Council. The idea is to create a quiet zone where trains passing through town do not sound

their horns.

This requires extra safety measures be placed at crossings a study would need to be conducted and it is the understanding of Kee that Union Pacific will send a representative out one time to analysis the area free of charge.

The City can also do studies according to guidelines set by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Currently Baker City has five public crossings that could be evaluated and has three private and one pedestrian crossings.

The private and pedestrian crossings cannot be analyzed by the city and would require FRA analysis. Mary Miller addressed Council that she did not feel this project needed to be a priority as she liked the sound saying she only lived "seven blocks from the tracks and the sound puts me to sleep even with my windows open."

She felt pursuing this was a waste of time and money.

Gunnar Carnwath provided council with statistics showing negative effects noise has to a community, particularly children.

He and a few others including Sabrina Stadeler, who is fairly new to our community, expressed concern over the fact that there are tracks right next to South Baker Intermediate School.

They noted the intense noise that often occurs while children are outside on the playground located right next to those tracks with only a chain link fence separating them. Councilor Downing said that he felt their speed was also an issue for concern and Councilor Lewis expressed concern for resale values of homes in closer proximity to railroad tracks.

After hearing from community members both against and in favor of the creation of a quiet zone council, who mostly agreed that a quiet zone was a good idea felt that at this point since there was no cost other than staff time to look into and research the matter.

Consensus was to gather information and the matter could be addressed further later. It should be noted a similar initiative was placed on a ballot in 2002, which voters voted against.

Baker Loves Bikes Proposal and Presentation

Jared Johnson recently made a proposal to the Parks and Recreation Board regarding the creation of a pump park on City property that is located north of "D" Street, east of the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway.

He location is highly visible from "D" street and on a routinely policed street. Johnson advised council he has secured much of what will be needed to create the park both labor and materials and has gotten verbal confirmation from Baker Loves Bikes that they will maintain the park.

Questions were asked about the City's liabilities for injury, which were advised to be about the same as the skate park, located by Sam-O Swim Center, zero to none.

Johnson said there would definitely be signage that it was "at your own risk" and it would be like any other city park with a dusk to dawn curfew.

Brian Vegter addressed Council on behalf of Baker Loves Bikes reiterating what Johnson had said regarding their involvement and also expressing his own personal excitement for the project and told council it was not just for 14-18 year-olds, even 65 year-olds could enjoy this.

Mike Kee laughed and said "Oh you're meaning me?"

Vegter laughing and responded, "No, not just you."

"Well, I'm not 65." Kee responded.

Mary Miller also addressed her support for this project, only recently getting into this type of bike riding, saying she was as "excited as a fourteen-year-old boy."

She is in favor of any projects that promote "community building," also touting the creation of this park as a draw for families that may just be visiting the community for events like the Motorcycle Rally or the Bike Classic.

Council asked if Johnson had neighbor input seeing as how in the area he is proposing two separate retirement communities are situated.

He said so far he had not, but was willing to knock on doors and ask.

The Council, also thinking this was a viable good idea, suggested he put in the footwork to contact residents in the area and come back to Council with an MOA (memo of agreement) for them to look at and move the project forward.

City Donation to Ford Foundation Cohort 5 Project Discussion

This was a lengthy discussion for Council that included one citizen, Jack Finley addressing council about the fact that the road behind his home was unpaved, 9th Street that runs behind the DMV from Hughes Lane to "L" Street.

He felt a donation to the Ford Foundation was absurd in light of the fact that he'd been asking for years to pave that portion of the street because the dust to his backyard made the space unusable.

Council listened to his concerns and offered suggestions, even explaining to him about each department having different things that they paid for.

This donation to Ford Foundation was to come out of the Parks and Recreation budget and the improvement he was suggesting would come from the Street budget, which did not have the funds available to do what he was asking as it was not a simple as just paving.

In the end Council chose not to donate at this time to Ford Foundation as the status of that budget is unclear at this time and the City will be preparing for new Budget negotiations in the next couple of months.

Mayor Mosier then turned the meeting over to Vice Mayor Downing as she needed to leave.

Resolution # 3766: Changes to the 2015-2016 Budget

Jeanie Dexter, City Finance Manager addressed Council asking that grant monies secured to assist in the replacement of the Boiler at Sam-O Swim center be allocated from the general fund to the Sam-O Swim budget to be used for their intended purpose.

Law requires a resolution be passed to move

money from one fund to another. Council agreed unanimously to pass the resolution.

Resolution #3767: Property and Weed Abatement Liens

This request made by Jeanie Dexter to council was to place liens on properties that had been amply noticed that monies to the city were due and have gone unheeded. By placing a lien on the property it simply allows the owed money to be paid to the City when property is sold. Council voted to pass this resolution.

City Council Email Policy

City Manager Kee addressed council on the policy that had been presented before to them.

He stated he felt it was "a good policy."

Council again discussed some of the pros and cons of making their emails public stressing concerns about the public not wanting certain contact made public, assuming confidentiality.

Councilor Abell felt that as a council she was not comfortable voting without the full council present, meaning Mayor Mosier because she knew the mayor had very strong feelings about the issue.

Kee suggested that the part about council email could be left out but felt having a policy in effect was important.

Councilor Lewis made a motion to pass the policy excluding publishing (or making them public in any way) Council emails at this time, that motion was seconded by Councilor Lowe with all voting in favor.

The publishing of council emails will be discussed at a later date.

City Manager/Director Comments

City Manager Kee stated that the profile for a new city manager was available on the City's website and that Slavin would be posting it nationally very soon with the first of the applications expected by the end of March.

He also advised Council that on an upcoming agenda to expect to see something in regards to a discussion about the Motorcycle Rally.

He also commented briefly on the situation that had unfolded very shortly before the meeting in Burns with the Bundy family that has occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

On the way to a Town Hall meeting located in John Day, shots were fired when the group was confronted by FBI agents.

One member of the Bundy group was killed and one wounded with several others being arrested.

Kee said at this time, to his knowledge, it was unclear who fired first.

Michelle Owen then addressed Council letting them know that the Public Works Advisory Committee had approved a water master plan that would be coming before them for their approval in the near future.

The plan would need to be approved by the state first and any changes would be made prior to them seeing it.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was heard with all in agreement.

Vice Mayor Downing officially adjourned the marathon meeting at 9:35 p.m.