

Local

County hears Emergency Management update, approves expenses for new 911 director

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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held its first, regular session of the month, on Wednesday, February 3, 2016, at 9 a.m., in the County Courthouse Commission Chambers.

Present from the Board were Commission Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett, and Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

Also in attendance were Baker County Planning Director Holly Kerns, Baker County Planner Kara Harris, Baker County Road Master Jeff Smith, Baker County Emergency Management Fire Authority Gary Timm, Baker County Emergency Management Director Jason Yencopal, Baker City Engineer Doug Schwinn, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Ranger Josh White, Baker City Fire Chief Mark John, former Baker County Commissioner Fred Warner, Jr., Ken Anderson, Marshall McComb, Ron Nash, John and Ramona Creighton, Kody Justus, Tork and Wanda Ballard, Bruce Morrison, and Joelleen Lindstrom.

The meeting was called to order, followed by the Invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance, both led by Harvey.

One change was noted to the agenda, a discussion to be held later in the session regarding approval of moving expenses for the newly hired Baker County 911 Consolidated Dispatch Director, Hope Lindsey, who will assume all responsibilities of the position on Tuesday, February 16, 2016. The agenda was then adopted, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Citizen Participation included comments from McComb, Nash, Ramona, and Morrison.

McComb commented about the Harney County/Hammond situation, ex-

pressing his concerns over threats made to officials, and the overall political and cultural battle. Part of his concern is that he understood that Baker County Sheriff Ash was accused of displaying behavior similar to Harney County Sheriff Ward, believed by some to have failed to protect citizens of Harney County, and side with Federal officials (McComb misunderstood--citizens expressed concern that Ash may act in a similar way if Baker County were faced with a similar scenario, acting in a cooperative role with Federal officials, but Ash wasn't actually accused of this, nor was there any indication he would exhibit this behavior).

McComb stated his plea to the Board to voice firm statements against such threats, and to be proactive, and Harvey responded that the Board is doing this.

Nash said that citizens should be more concerned about the threats from the United States Forest Service (USFS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). He said Sheriff Ward isn't protecting the citizens of Harney County, that he hopes a similar scenario doesn't happen in Baker County, and that citizens need to stand up to these threats.

Ramona said scenarios like this are happening across the nation, and people are angry.

Morrison discussed a rumor about the USFS citing individuals for emblem removal from government vehicles. He said that he heard USFS may possibly pursue legal action against the group Forest Access For All (FAFA) for a Facebook post regarding this topic.

Morrison said the government is at extremes, and citizens need to push back.

Harvey responded that the government has far more pressing issues than citing people for the removal of a sticker.



L-R: Jason Yencopal and Gary Timm gave an Emergency Management update to County Commissioners on Wednesday.

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The minutes from the Wednesday, January 20, 2016 session were approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Timm and Yencopal provided the Board with an Emergency Management/Fire Department update. Timm said that key goals include reducing the costs of fighting, and the size of, wildfires, including education through programs and campaigns, and that there is major local interest in achieving these goals.

He had copies present for attendees, of the 2007 publication, "Living With Fire: A Guide For The Homeowner," which he said is being updated. The costs for publication are covered through donations, rural fire department dues, and grants, and not the County, he said. Also in the process of being updated is the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Timm said.

Yencopal expanded on the update, speaking about Emergency Management training hours being completed, part of which included full-scale emergency exercises, the wildfires

last year. He mentioned the Preparedness Fair, held last May, area water source levels, and he discussed the drought situation last year throughout the region.

White discussed with the Board a Title III, YCC and Watershed Enhancement Project submission form. The goals, and objectives of the project, as described in the document, are as follows: "This project will enhance rangeland, and watershed condition, health, and function on the Whitman Ranger District within Baker County. This restoration project will restore native plant communities, improve fish and wildlife habitats, water quality, and provide benefits to local communities through employment, and educational opportunities. Further, this project proposes to maintain high-use hiking trails, conduct brush removal, and other maintenance on forest roads, and treat invasive species."

The Powder River, Pine Creek, and Burnt River watersheds were chosen for the project, which will include contract workers, the Federal workforce, volunteers, and youth crews. The total cost for the project is estimated at \$157,750, the sources of which are listed as USFS, Title II, permittees, Idaho Power, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF). This project was ranked as a number one priority, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Harvey.

A public hearing was held in the matter of Order No. 2016-104, Naming a Private Road, "Pine View Road," Located Along the Western Boundary of Tax Lot 900 in Township 9 South, Range 39 East, Section 4 W.M., Baker County, OR.

Harris discussed the order with the Board, a request from Baker City to partition an existing parcel the City owns into three residential parcels. The road is located off Salmon Creek Road, according to the document.

Schwinn stated he was in favor of the road naming, and neither he, nor Smith, voiced any objections, when asked by Harvey.

There were no objections from attendees noted, and the matter was continued to the next, regular Commission session, Wednesday, February 17, 2016, at 10:15 a.m., with a

motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Additionally, Smith discussed briefly with the Board the work being performed, and to be performed, in order to keep County roads accessible, and in good repair. Harvey said that Halfway area residents have been contacting the County regarding road conditions, and he said the County Road Department is actively working on keeping the roads accessible.

The following orders were approved by the Board:

Order No. 2016-105, Appointing Members To The Eastern Oregon Coordinating Care (EOCC) Local Community Advisory Committee (LCAC), with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Cindy Denne, Lisa Ladendorff, Robin Nudd, Toni Bennett, and Christina Barnes were appointed, their terms set to expire on February 1, 2019.

Order No. 2016-106, Appointing Members To The Transient Lodging Tax Marketing Committee, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Gaynelle, Nielsen, Chelsa Mitchell, and Cathy Cook, were appointed, their terms set to expire on March 1, 2017, and Cheryl Buchanan, Ginger Savage, and Lisa Shira were appointed, their terms set to expire on March 1, 2018.

Order No. 2016-107, Re-Appointing Members To The Northeast Oregon Area Commission On Transportation (NEACT), with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Mary Jo Carpenter, and Michelle Owens were appointed, their terms set to expire on July 31, 2017.

Order No. 2016-108, Appointing A Member To The Baker County Wolf Depredation Compensation Committee, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Jacob Bingham was appointed, his term set to expire on September 1, 2018. Lynn Shumway has applied as an alternate.

Order No. 2016-109, Re-Appointing Members To The Northeast Oregon Economic Development District Board, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett. Bennett, Harvey, Ed Hibbard, and Bob Parker were appointed, their terms set to expire on December 31,

2018.

Order No. 2016-110, Re-Appointing A Member To The Baker County Budget Board, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Pat Sullivan was appointed, his term set to expire on January 1, 2019.

Order No. 2016-111, Appointing A Justice Of The Peace Pro-Tem For The Baker District, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Damien Yervasi, and Elizabeth Orwick were appointed to serve during the absences of the Honorable Don Williams, for a term set to expire on December 31, 2016.

The following documents were ratified:

State of Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) No. 149635, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. This agreement is between DHS and Baker County, for Job Placement Services to DHS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Participants referred to the County by DHS, according to the document. The maximum amount payable to the County from DHS under this agreement is \$150,000, and the agreement is set to expire on September 30, 2017.

Amendment No. 3 to Oregon Health Authority (OHA) 2015-2017 IGA No. 14781, between OHA and Baker County, For The Financing Of Community Addictions And Mental Health Services, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. The amount of \$100,000 was awarded to the County.

The final order of business included a discussion, added to the agenda, regarding partial compensation for moving expenses for Lindsey.

The Board expressed comments about the difficult task of finding a qualified candidate for the position, after having placed nationwide advertisements. Compensation, in the amount of \$3,250, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

This amount represents roughly half of the expenses, Bennett said.

Lindstrom commented that moving expenses associated with employment relocation can usually be considered tax deductions.

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