

Local County Commissioners

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The BHS FFA team presented its debate during the segment Citizen Participation. The members, in pairs of two to three or more, debated the pros and cons of grazing, and wild-fire fuel reduction. Noting the large amount of acreage burned during the 2015 wildfire season, the team focused on one element—fuel—of the three elements necessary for fire—heat, air, and fuel.

The issue of the prevention of wildfire to begin with, via the reduction of fuel—grass, shrubs, trees, etc.—was emphasized by the team, including the pros and cons of livestock grazing, and targeted grazing.

The minutes from the last regular session, Wednesday, February 17, 2016, were approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Harvey introduced to Lindsey to attendees.

Smith provided a Road Department update, and said, “Budget-wise, we’re in pretty good shape.”

He discussed issues with SRS (Secure Rural Schools) funding, stating that there needs to be a more permanent, secure, long-term funding plan. Other details Smith

mentioned are that the Halfway and Richland areas had been hit heavily with winter snow, which the Department has been working hard to clear from the roads; the Department is in the process of hiring a new mechanic; and, the Department’s equipment is in good shape currently.

Carpenter discussed a 2016 STF (Special Transportation Fund) Discretionary Funds Grant application. According to the application, the purpose of the STF Discretionary Program “...is to provide a flexible, coordinated, reliable and continuing source of revenue in support of transportation services for people who are senior and people with disabilities of any age.”

The stated purpose of the project is to “...retrofit one transit bus, four cutaway buses, and three minivans with appropriate cameras which will face forward, back, toward the passenger entry door, and at the wheelchair lift, as needed for each style of bus. It will also purchase the necessary monitoring hardware and software, as well as installation and training costs.”

The total estimated project cost is \$27,000. The application was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from

Kerns. Carpenter also discussed a Regional Vanpool Development Proposal, prepared by Northeast Oregon Public Transit for the Board of Commissioners of both Union, and Baker Counties.

According to the document, the project would allow groups of five people or more to ride share, resulting in significant savings in fuel, insurance, maintenance, and other operating costs.

Citing the need for more research into details of the project, the decision was made to continue the discussion to the next, regular session, on Wednesday, March 16, 2016, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Addendum No. 1 to a Professional Services Agreement, between Baker County, and St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center, Ltd., for a Mid-Level Provider, for the School Based Health Center, and Addendum #1 to a Professional Services Agreement, between Baker County, and St. Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City, for a Mid-Level Provider, for the School Based Health Center, were approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Both contracts include the term of January



Todd Arriola/The Baker County Press

Gary Dielman objected again to prayer/invocation again at a County Commissioners’ session this week.

31, 2016, through June 30, 2016, with payment from the County to each contractor, at the rate of \$55 per hour.

Dielman began the topic of the Invocation before Commission sessions, by stating that he has an issue with, according to him, the seemingly one-sided, Christian prayer Harvey recites before each session, prior to the Pledge of Allegiance. Dielman says this invocation is unconstitutional, and excludes other religions.

He said, “You know my position is, because, I’ve

provided you with plenty of written information.” He went on to discuss a program produced by the Oregon Public Broadcast System in January as part of Oregon Experience detailing the lives of people of Jewish descent in Oregon, and specifically Baker County.

Dielman provided information for the program, including historical documents, and photos, about the “... Jews in Oregon,” he said, and he explained some details regarding the program, and of experiences here. “I mention this, because the Jews don’t believe in Jesus Christ, and my objection is that you say, ‘In Jesus’ name, I pray.’ So it’s a Christian prayer, and I don’t stand for it because, it is discriminatory... I’ve never seen you poll your audience, to find out the religious beliefs, of anybody who might be sitting there ...”

Dielman, who stood for the Pledge of Allegiance, but not the Invocation prior to this session, said he was singled out as a non-Christian because he did not stand, and he said that prayers should be given with attendees all seated to

prevent discrimination. Harvey noted the lack of Dielman’s presence at most of the previous Commission sessions, and said, “You asked us to change the order, which we did (Harvey had initially begun sessions with the Pledge of Allegiance, then the Invocation, but, changed the order per Dielman’s request) ... You actually complained again, stating that we hadn’t, and yet, you’ve never been her to actually see it...I really don’t think I’ve singled anyone out ...”

Noting that Martin had previously spoken about the issue, having stated to the Commissioners that the Board isn’t violating the law, Harvey said, “I exercise that (freedom of religion), and I’m thankful for that because I don’t have to leave it at the door when I come in here to do my job.”


The discussion, heated at times, continued, and Dielman asked Bennett and Kerns where they stand on the issue and why prayer is included as part of the sessions.

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BLOOD DRAW

Participate in blood panel screenings offered by
Saint Alphonsus Medical Center—Baker City

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March	17	18	19



Join us!

7:00 a.m.—9:30 a.m.

Saint Alphonsus
Medical Center—Baker City
Powder River Conference Room

Use Administration entrance (old care center entrance) located in the back of the hospital near the ER entrance.

Basic Package: Lipid panel—\$0 (no charge)

Comprehensive Package: Lipid panel, CBC, Comprehensive Metabolic Panel—\$20

TSH: \$10

No Appointment Needed.

IMPORTANT: Please abstain from all food and drink at least 12 hours before your blood screening. Drinking plain water is encouraged.

Your results


will be mailed to you.

*Insurance will not be billed. You will receive a receipt and description of the tests. Individuals are responsible for checking with their insurance carriers for possible reimbursement.

If you have questions, call Laura Huggins at 541-523-8102.

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