

Local

Sumpter Council hears reports

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Sumpter City Council's first March meeting featured a video presentation, reports from various departments, and discussion of two grants.

Special presentation

Special guest Lorrie Harvey introduced a video on last summer's forest fires. Harvey explained they have been working with Sound Image Productions out of Utah on this video, which will be presented to legislators to help them understand the effect of the wildfires on this side of the state.

Approval of minutes

Myers then led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the Council approving the minutes of February 23rd's meeting with corrections.

Bills

Myers commented that he declared an emergency during the last snowstorm and hired Carey Clarke to grade streets and get rid of the foot of slush on them. He said it was a good thing the roads were cleared because the next day there was an ambulance call.

Bookkeeper Kathi Vinson made an addition to the bills. Scott's Heating came out to address a furnace problem, which turned out to be a bad lighter switch. The bill came to \$241.75 paid through the General Fund.

Payment of bills was approved with Councilmember Carey Clarke abstaining from the vote due to the payment to himself being included.

Mayor's Report

Myers stated he discovered this morning he'd been hacked and doesn't know what any of his e-mails say right now. He said getting computers up and going again has been frustrating.

Utility Manager's Report

Myers reported Jeff and Julie McKinney are home sick with the flu.

City Recorder's Report

Vinson shared that the semi-annual franchise payment from OTEC has been received and came to a little over \$7,000. She anticipates that the next payment will put the amount "just a hair" over that budgeted. Vinson also stated she had it verbally that Dan Patton is going to rescind his resignation from the Planning Commission.

Fire Department Report

Jim Sheller reported the Fire Department is doing a lot of medical training, meeting the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Sheller said there was one medical call out and "thank God the roads were plowed."

Sheller asked John Young to share about the CPR class that will be held in Sumpter on March 23rd. Young explained this high performance CPR is being implemented by Baker County. A state trainer for the Mobile Training Unit is presenting the class. Young said this type of CPR has several steps and "lots more involvement with basic life-support." He stated it appears that this type of CPR may increase survival rates.

Myers said it helps when everyone in the City learns at least basic CPR. Clarke

added that the first five minutes are critical. Young said he believes that the training is open to the public, but certification will not be offered, as protocols for this type of CPR are still being developed.

Young also reported that the Department purchased three CPR mannequins—adult, child, and infant—for \$325 plus shipping.

Planning Report

LeAnne Woolf reported that on February 25, the Commission received a preliminary plan from the Farnsworths. Questions were exchanged and since the request involved interceptor tanks, the Commission requested input from the Utility Manager. The Commission also worked on compiling a list of items for emergency kits, including what would be good for which level evacuation order.

On March 3, the Commission met and reviewed changes the Utility Manager requested on the Farnsworth request. As he was at training and then sick, no site inspection has yet been planned. The Commission did preliminary reviews of a conditional use permit, a street vacation request submitted by the Howards, and tackled Goal #2 of the Comp Plan.

Plans for the next meeting include revisiting a couple of items on Goal #2. The meeting will be preceded by a hearing on the street vacation request.

Clarke asked if the Farnsworths are keeping up on providing information. Woolf responded that there are two different projects. That which is unpermitted and uninspected is something that the Building Inspector and County are dealing with. This application regarding tanks in back is new. Woolf stated the Farnsworths have been told that new paperwork and fees will likely be involved due to complexities of the project, including the necessity of an easement adjustment if the project is approved.

Comments by Council Member Annie Oakley

Myers stated that the comments presented by Oakley after the last meeting were mostly about benefits and wages and asked if that was correct. Oakley agreed and said the Council needs to review this every year. She suggested a special meeting or workshop. Myers stated that Vinson is setting up a schedule for budget hearings and that would be a good time to incorporate this discussion.

Upon request, Myers read a letter from Vinson, Jeff McKinney, and Julie McKinney, asking that any discussion of employee benefits and wages be delayed until all employees could be present. Council agreed to include this discussion with the first budget meeting. Vinson stated she would be setting up the budget calendar agenda the next day in order to get meetings advertised in accordance with State-required timelines. She stated she will contact the five citizens who served on the Budget Committee last time and see if they will continue for this time.

A question was broached as to employee health benefits. Myers stated that what City employees are being paid is below aver-



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Lorrie Harvey speaks to the Sumpter City Council.

age, almost to the level of minimum wage, but the inclusion of benefits brings the pay up to a comparable wage. He stated budget meetings are open and anyone with input can attend. The meeting schedule will be publicized.

Myron Woodley

Myers stated Woodley sent a letter about the City plugging up a culvert to "try and flood him out". Vinson explained the situation was resolved. Lee German was in Volunteer Park with the City backhoe, working on cleaning out the culvert that flows under the highway and ensuring there was enough space for the water to run through. German went over afterward and explained what was going on to Woodley, who seemed to be happy with the explanation.

TGM proposal

Myers asked for feedback on a Transportation and Growth Management Program proposal. Councilmember Robert Armbruster stated that he did have some concerns that this is, to his understanding, a 12% matching grant and that there is an expense to the City. He stated the content regarding transportation development is encouraging, especially in regards to sidewalks and surface streets.

Myers replied that he was interested in the Transportation System Planning assessment service, which helps local governments review transportation plans and determine where action is needed.

The grant application deadline is June 11th and Myers asked if anyone would like to take this project on. Armbruster volunteered to see what he could find out and the Council agreed.

IFA Application for Grant

Myers said he contacted the engineer and told him they need to get a contract and cost spreadsheet, as these are needed for the grant. Due to his computer issues, he doesn't know if the contractor responded.

Clarke asked if the engineer has been working on the project in a timely manner. Myers stated that he started and then was called to an emergency culvert installation on Canyon Creek. That has been completed and Myers said, "Now we can get him going on this."

Myers shared an idea he had about approaching the US Forest Service regarding a swap of land to improve the City's wastewater irrigation site

and said he will share more if there is a potential of this happening.

Public Input

Bill Harvey shared an opportunity to give input on the US Forest Service's new Forest Resilience Plan. There will be a public meeting March 31st at 6 p.m. at the Armory in Baker City.

Harvey also mentioned the request of Title 2 funds for potential work in Sumpter's watershed. These funds, if received, would go to the implementation but not the creation of a plan.

Myrna Clarke asked about setting up a Town Hall meeting between the two gentlemen running for County Sheriff. Myers stated that would be wonderful if someone would like to set it up.

Lorrie Harvey asked if Council would be interested in having the new Chamber of Commerce director come to address them. They agreed.

Rella Brown said she wished to comment regarding wages and benefits of City employees. She said, "If you want good people to work for you, you have to pay them accordingly." She continued, if the appropriate pay cannot be offered, benefits or something must be offered instead. She said she believes the City has some really good employees and stated, "if not for the Utility Manager, many of us wouldn't be able to get to our homes. We need to keep this in mind when discussing wages and benefits."

Myers reiterated that anyone who wants to comment on the budgeting process is welcome to attend those meetings. He said he appreciates having people involved with matters of concern to the City.

Jim Sheller reported the most recent snowmobile season as the best in the last five years or so and thanked the community for their support. He stated they put 1,600 miles on the Snow Cat this year and thanked all the groomers that put time in on the trails. He reported the biggest Poker Run ever, including 50 or more sleds through at the check points. John Young reported the Snowmobile Club netted a little over \$3,300 for the event.

Robert Armbruster asked how to address corrections or clarifications to the Water Tower. Woolf explained that the editorial board is the Mayor, City Recorder, and herself.

Ethics complaint

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Writes Lynch, "To my knowledge the full-time position was not posted for hire or posted in-house for internal candidates. It is my understanding that Ruthie Boyd was promoted to the position without any formal application process completed."

Lynch goes on to state, "It is my understanding Jerry Boyd was directly involved in discussions and played a direct role in the decision."

Lynch's complaint includes another allegation that Boyd directly supervised his daughter. Last December 1, *The Baker County Press* obtained a memo from County Commission Chair Bill Harvey stating that he, not Boyd, would directly supervise Ruthie Boyd in her position.

Jerry Boyd's counter-statement explains that between the time he retired in mid-2012 from his Dispatch Director position and the time his was brought back in his advisory position, his daughter was first hired as a half-time Dispatcher and then a full-time Dispatcher. Boyd says he had nothing to do with either personnel decision.

Baker County personnel records submitted show that Ruthie Boyd was hired full-time on a temporary basis in January 2015 when her father was not employed by the County. Her temporary status was, however, converted to permanent in July of 2015.

Heidi Martin, who serves in a Human Resources capacity for the County stated that there were two half-time Dispatchers at the time, and traditionally, the County offers those internal employees the permanent, full-time positions rather than advertise externally. Both half-time Dispatchers were moved to full-time positions—Ruthie Boyd first, due to seniority.

Lynch also questioned Boyd's supervisory authority as Reserve Commander over his daughter who is also a Reserve Officer.

Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner penned a letter that ultimately supported Boyd's position by confirming that Reserve Officer positions are in fact, purely volunteer.

ORS 244.175-244.179 excludes unpaid positions from nepotism claims within a public body.

Lynch also submitted a list of County and City employees who "have been involved with or witness to the ongoing problems that are occurring," in addition to other information. OGE did not contact these employees; their jurisdiction is strictly limited regarding applicable statutes and its investigations within them. Therefore, the matter has been dismissed, writes OGE Executive Director Ronald Bersin.

According to multiple sources, separate, private litigation may be pending.

A new call center director took the helm mid-February of this year.

Free concert ahead at Nazarene Church

Baker City welcomes back Ryan Stevenson in Concert! National recording artist, singer, and songwriter, Ryan Stevenson was a hit with a Baker City audience of all ages at a live outdoor concert at Bulldog Stadium last fall. Ryan wrote "we'd love to connect with your community again – would you like to host a concert?" The answer was yes! Ryan will be in Baker City on Thursday, March 17th, for a free concert sponsored by local area churches at the Baker City Nazarene Church, 1250 Hughes Lane, Baker City.

Ryan's music appeals to all ages. Comments from past Baker City attendees were centered on his musical talent and artistic ability, and an appreciation for his desire to serve small communities. Although Ryan tours with the likes of The NewsBoys and TobyMac, he's from a small rural town in Oregon.

Stevenson lives in Boise with his family and is signed to TobyMac's label, Gotee Records. His music blends influences from soul, pop, and some of the great guitarists to create engaging acoustic guitar driven melodies. Embracing the idea that some of the most profound moments of worship emerge not from mountain-top experiences but from difficult, perhaps even catastrophic circumstance gives Ryan's lyrics a poetic vulnerability reflecting honestly on the difficulties everyone faces. Wanting to honestly and vulnerably communicate through his recording and his live performance the grace and love that guides him through his own trials, Ryan Stevenson writes with a musical maturity beyond his years and a spiritual sensitivity that easily draws people into the musical message.

The concert is for all ages, family-friendly, and will offer something fun as students finish their last day of school before Spring Break. To that end, there will be a Teen Game Night immediately following the concert at the gym in the Nazarene Church Family Life Center. Games, refreshments, and fun will be the focus for area teens. The game night is hosted by local area youth groups.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with music beginning at 7:00 p.m. Limited seating is available and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. There will be an opening performance by local musicians. Door prizes, and refreshments for after the concert, are all part of the event. Stevenson will also have merchandise available for purchase. A free will offering will be taken with proceeds going to support Ryan Stevenson. The Teen Game Night will be held immediately following the concert from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Both events are sponsored by local area churches.