

Local

City Council approves Water Facility Plan, extends City Manager's contract one month

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Tuesday evening the regular City Council meeting was called to order by Vice Mayor Mike Downing as Mayor Kim Moiser was not present.

Downing led the room in the pledge of allegiance and gave the invocation before City Recorder Luke Yeaton called roll with all other Councilors present.

The first matter Council attended to was the consent agenda. With a motion to approve the agenda by Councilor Abell and a second by Councilor Lewis, Council passed the motion with a unanimous vote.

Downing then called for Citizen Participation. First to come forward was Terry McQuisten.

He addressed Council regarding the recent rural lives matter rally in Halfway. He said, "I want to publicly thank the people that set that up. It was very organized and a nice rally."

He said that rally was about people's lives employment, schools among other things.

He noted that there were County Commissioners and others running for office who attended that took their time and made the effort to attend and speak about "the Constitution, our rights and our responsibilities. There's one that a lot of people miss is that responsibility part."

He acknowledged Council as being responsible in what they do, he understood citizens were going to rant but advised Council, "What I am encouraging you to do is encourage folks to get points of fact not assumptions."

He also noted the issue that Council had heard regarding train whistles and commented that perhaps there was a way the railroad could be approached about covering up some of the graffiti and vulgarities on their trains after all, those trains pass right by one if our elementary school where children are exposed to them.

Next Lara Petittlerc-Stokes, Manager of Communications and Governmental affairs for OTEC addressed council

awarding them with a quick update on projects and investments they have been working on. She also presented them with a quarterly Baker County franchise check in the amount of \$ 113,812.31.

She noted that last summer's fires in both Grant and Baker counties delayed some progress of the work that is being done to upgrade the system.

She also advised that there was still time to nominate for the Peggi Timm civic leadership award, selection deadline is 5 p.m. on April 1 and the nomination forms can be found on OTEC's website.

She also extended an invitation to the annual meeting taking place at the Oregon Events Center on April 30th where the winner will be announced.

Mike Kee advised council that he had Shelly Cutler present to introduce to the Council, she was the new Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce.

Cutler introduced herself to Council telling them she had "been on the job for about 60 days."

She told them membership was up and the Chamber was getting re involved with programs that they had pulled away from in the past and that was exciting community members. She felt things were headed in the right direction.

The Council welcomed her.

Last Kody Justus approached Council introducing himself telling them he was running for Baker County Commissioner. He said, "The only reason I address the Council is to introduce myself. I'm here more to learn from you and your Council then to share. Thank You."

Water Facilities Plan
Michelle Owen addressed Council advising them that the Water Facilities Plan before them tonight was for them to adopt.

She stated that while not every element of the plan may be exactly as it needed to be there was room, after adoption, to change things as needed.

She also advised that

adopting the plan did not mean adopting every item in it financially, the funding for those items was done yearly at budget time based on the identified projects for the year.

The plan had been reviewed and discussed at length by the Public Works Advisory Committee before being recommended that it be sent to the Council for adoption. Owen introduced David Stangle and LaDonne Harris of Murray Smith and Associates who led council through a presentation.

The presentation outlined the City's current water system and includes long term strategies for a five-year and twenty-year plan.

Stangle said that the cities current system is a pretty good system and with the implantation of the new UV water treatment system Baker City is in a good position however, Stangle did think the addition of another well was critical. Council posed several questions regarding the need for a second well and what having that second well would mean in case of a fire in the watershed.

Some members of Council were not sold on the idea as it is an expensive what if but it was pointed out that last summer's fire did come a little too close for comfort to our watershed.

Stangle also was vocal that a rate hike of 10% was almost immediately necessary to help with costs incurred by the new UV plant. In the end, Councilor Lowe moved to approve the Baker City Water Facility Plan with a second by Councilor Abell.

The motion passed with a unanimous council vote. Award Golf Course Irrigation Design Contract Michelle Owen addressed Council about the proposals received to design the golf course irrigation system.

She stated that they had received two proposals and of the two Baer Group had been selected.

Councilor Lewis questioned reimbursable expenditures on the bid and asked if that could be



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OTEC's communications director Lara Petittlerc-Stokes addresses Council.

clarified. Owen explained that could be for normal costs such as gas to travel over her etc. and indicated if Council wished a cap could most certainly be placed on that so as to not exceed budget dollars.

Owen also explained that in the decision to move forward with this project it had been discussed that the remaining 9 holes be redesigned to fit into this new design should the need arise in later years to accomplish that task. It made sense to have the piece already in place.

Owen did express some concern that technology may advance making that design insufficient. Some debate was had as to whether or not it was a good use of money to do the additional work now or not. Owen did feel for grant purposes it might be a good idea to have it completed and was confident that additional funding to do additional work could be secured easily.

Councilor Lewis was astonished at the price simply for the design element of the process that did not include any actual work however did make a motion to award the contract to Baer for all 18 holes with a second by Councilor Lowe and all Councilors unanimously voting in favor.

Update on City Manager Recruitment

Current City Manager Mike addressed Council advising that the company Slavin Management Consultants have narrowed their search to 10-15 candidates.

He says by the end of March Council should have an Executive Session to choose the candidates to interview which should be conducted mid to late April.

Slavin will then conduct background investigations

after which Council should pick their final candidate. Upon offering and acceptance of employment Council should expect the candidate to need approximately one month to terminate from any current employment and relocate.

That puts the timeline well into May whereas initially the projection was to have a new City Manager secured by the end of April.

Kee has offered to extend his contract for one month with the City if they so choose.

He also offered the option of appointing any of the well qualified department heads as interim City Manager until a newly hired Manager can take the reins.

Councilor Langrell seemed very upset by the fact that this has taken longer than originally anticipated, felt that it was not right we received far less applications than The Dalles, who has also been advertising with Slavin during this same time period and hinted that it was all too convenient that Kee was able and willing to provide another month of service all while drawing his PERS retirement.

As Kee pointed out he is only allotted so many hours in a year he can work and collect his PERS so while he is still within the allotted time it is quickly expiring.

After some debate among Council it was moved by Councilor Lowe to extend Kee's contract one month with a second by Councilor Abell.

Downing, Lewis Lowe and Abell voted in favor while Langrell and Thomas voted against.

The motion passed.

Kee will take a department head under his wing to help with the transition and that department head

will help a new City Manager familiarize themselves with Baker City.

City Manager/Director Comments

Kee expressed desire to set dates as soon as possible for another Goal Setting session.

He felt what came out of last year's sessions were extremely positive and beneficial to Baker City.

Michelle Owen advised she had been contacted by ODOT about doing a \$21,000 project that required no match from the city to study Campbell street that would include the replacement of most of the stop signs.

She just need to respond to ODOT with a yay or nay from Council.

Council all was in agreement that at no cost to the city this was a project they should most definitely support.

Council Comments

Councilor Downing spoke of the recent Scotts Firefighter Stair Climb benefiting Leukemia and Lymphoma that took place in Downtown Seattle on Sunday March 6, 2016.

He indicated seven participated representing Baker City including the departments Chief Mark John.

The Climb took place at the Columbia Center downtown where participants climbed over 20 flights of stairs in full firefighter gear.

The fastest time was by a Montana firefighter at just over 10 minutes.

Councilor Downing was proud to inform Council he had almost cut his time in half over last years' time.

He also informed Council they group had been invited to participate next year in New Zealand.

With no other business on the agenda Downing adjourned the meeting.

Construction work planned on Highway 395

The Oregon Department of Transportation will be paving a short section of U.S. 95 (Idaho-Oregon-Nevada Hwy.) in southern Malheur County from the west-end of Jordan Valley at mile post 20.71 to mile post 25.62.

The project is scheduled

to be constructed later this summer with work being completed by fall.

The actual paving operation should only take about two weeks, with highway striping occurring later in the season.

Travelers can expect lane closures, flaggers, pilot

cars and up to twenty minute delays during construction activities.

The project is needed to address deteriorating pavement surfaces. Work will include grinding out three inches of old asphalt and inlaying three inches of new pavement.

Legislative session adjourns

The 2016 short session of the Oregon State Legislature adjourned last Thursday, March 3.

The session was marked by tax hikes, utility hikes, and minimum wage hikes. All spending cuts were

rejected by the majority party, which is the Democratic party in Oregon.

Prison to host dinner

Powder River Correctional Facility (PRCF) is inviting community members who may have an interest in volunteering to a volunteer appreciation and recruitment dinner to find out more about the program.

The event will be Friday, April 8, 2016, at 5:45 p.m., at PRCF, located at 3600 13th St., in Baker City.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn about the PRCF volunteer program from current volunteers and hear from incarcerated men about the

impact volunteers have had on their lives.

Incarceration can be a life-changing time of redirection and growth, which can transform people who have made mistakes into productive community members —volunteering in a correctional setting can help that evolution.

Any knowledge of gardening, knitting, quilting, art work, writing, welding, cooking, computers, exercise techniques, photography, performing arts, coping skills, budgeting, and any other activity that

potential volunteers wish to share can help transform the lives of others.

In order to attend, participants are required to provide their full name, date of birth, and driver's license number by Tuesday, March 22, 2016, as a background check will be conducted.

This is necessary from all guests when entering a correctional facility. Please RSVP to Lori Fuzi at (541) 523-6680 ext. 264 by March 22, 2016 with this information.