

Local

City Council ratifies employee labor contract



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

L-R: Councillors Richard Langrell, Loran Joseph, Mayor Kim Mosier, Mike Downing, Daniel Lowe, Jim Thomas and Public Works Director Michelle Owen.

• FORMER HEALTH DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR ROBIN NUDD JOINS CITY STAFF

BY GINA K. SWARTZ
Gina@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Tuesday evening saw the first regularly scheduled City Council meeting for the month of September.

Mayor Mosier called the meeting to Order with Councilman Joseph leading the Pledge of Allegiance and delivering the invocation.

Julie Smith, City Recorder conducted roll call with all councillors present.

Mayor Mosier called for a consent of the Agenda, which consisted of approving the minutes from the August 23, 2016 regular City Council meeting and approval of a liquor license for Baker City business Zephyr.

Councilor Downing moved to approve with no corrections or additions. A second was heard by Councilor Lowe. Council voted unanimously in favor.

Mayor Mosier called next for Citizen Participation. Seeing none the Council moved forward with the meeting after Mayor Mosier stated as a reminder, “to those watching on the television or the internet, anyone can come and speak to the Council about anything that isn’t on the agenda during any meeting.”

Boards and Commissions appointment: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Julie Smith addressed Council advising that there was just one application for the currently vacant seat, that Jeff Nelson had filled until his term had expired July 1, 2016.

Smith stated that Nelson had not submitted his application for reappointment immediately “to allow for opportunity for others to come forward.”

Upon failing to receive any other interest Smith said she contacted Nelson who said he would be happy to reapply.

“His application is before you tonight for consideration,” she said.

Councilor Lowe moved to appoint Mr. Nelson to the board saying, “He’s done a very enthusiastic great job.”

Councilor Downing

seconded the motion and a unanimous vote was cast by Council to reappoint Nelson to the board. Nelson’s new term will expire in three years.

Mayor Mosier extended her thanks for Nelson’s willingness to continue to serve on that board.

Ordinance #3350 Charter Franchise Agreement, Amending Ordinance #3349

City Manager Warner addressed Council advising that Ordinance #3349 inadvertently contained wording in the Franchise agreement previously adopted identifying Charter Communications as providing telecommunication services, when in fact they will be providing Cable network services.

Amending the particular wording in the agreement will not change any other part of the agreement.

However, the amending of this Ordinance #3349 to Ordinance #3350 requires three readings before adoption. Councilor Downing made a motion to hear a first reading of Ordinance #3350. Councilor Lowe made a second followed by a unanimous Council vote.

Warner then read the Ordinance in its entirety to Council who, upon a motion by Councilor Lowe and a second by Councilor Thomas, all voted to accept this first reading.

Mayor Mosier then said, “If there is a motion to have a second reading, by title only and that motion carries, we could do that tonight. Is that correct?”

Warner answered that was in fact correct.

Councilor Thomas made a motion with a second by Councilor Downing for a second reading of the Ordinance by title only, with all councillors voting in favor.

Warner then read the Ordinance by title only with a motion to accept being heard by Councilor Thomas, seconded by Councilor Joseph.

A unanimous vote passed the motion.

A third reading is planned for the next Council meeting.

Ratification of AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal employees) Local 2175 BCEA (Baker City Employees Association) Labor Contract

Warner advised a tentative agreement has been reached and the proposed contract was before the Council.

Warner noted he had provided this information to Council highlighting changes so that Council members could go through the contract in their own time consider the information and ask any questions that they may have.

Warner advised, “This is a three-year contract. The employees will continue with the same insurance package and we would fully fund the health savings account. The wages, at a 1.25% increase per year and there were salary steps based on yearly satisfactory performance evaluations that did not change.”

Mosier confirmed with Warner that the salary step information was the same as it had been in the past with no changes and that the 1.25% increase was automatic and equivalent to a cost of living increase. “And salary steps are only given with a satisfactory performance evaluation,” he reiterated.

Some discussion was had over initial considerations to search out lower cost insurance plans and the way the city contributes to health spending accounts.

Warner advised that what they had before them was what all parties had agreed on to be the best plan of action.

The employees had originally wanted with a 1.5% wage increase with a fully funded HSA.

The City had wanted to lower contributions to that account over the next two years.

The decision to continue to fully fund the HSA and only allow a wage increase of 1.25% in lieu of 1.5% only made an estimated approximately \$100 difference per employee that the City was willing to accept.

“It was basically a push,” said Mosier in regard to fully funding the HSA, versus lowering the yearly wage increase amounts, to which Warner agreed.

Mosier said what she liked best about the whole deal was “that it is a three-year contract” so negotiations would not be an issue that would need to be considered for the next three budget cycles easing that burden.

Councilor Lowe moved to ratify the purposed labor contract with the BCEA.

A second was heard by Councilor Downing. Council voted unanimously to accept the contract.

Mayor Mosier noted a lot of work had gone into the

matter and gave her thanks to these involved in reaching an agreement.

2016 Pipe Burst Contract Award and Cured in Place Pipe Bid Award – Storm water/Wastewater

Public works director Michelle Owen addressed Council first regarding the pipe burst contract.

She began by stating, “Pipe bursting sounds a little more dramatic than it really is. We’re not really exploding anything.” In the pipe bursting process, a slightly larger pneumatic head is pushed through existing pipe breaking it up and new pipe, in this case a plastic pipe is attached to the pneumatic head and thus set in place as it is pulled along. This process does not require trenching however once the new pipe is in place crews must expose each lateral service connection in order to reconnect to the new pipe. Pipe bursting is an excellent solution for the re construction of pipelines that are difficult to replace through conventional means.”

The area that is proposed for this project is located in a narrow alley north of Nevada Avenue between Fourth St. and David Eccles Road.

Owen indicated that pipe bursting has not been done in Baker City before but has become very common elsewhere.

Because it’s not common in the area there are few companies that do this type of work.

Owen advised that this project was listed in the Capital Plan and was budgeted for.

Only one contractor had replied to the request for quotes Cascade Pipeline Corporation.

They have visited the project site, reviewed the scope of work and provided a bid of \$23,549.

Mayor Mosier asked, “Is there a reason why only one replied?”

Owen advised the reason she believed only one response was received was that this wasn’t a common practice in our rural area but there were many contractors in more urban areas providing this service.

Mosier also expressed concern about how the users of the City utilities would be impacted in that area as work was being done.

Owen stated they would be working with affected

customers and did not believe they would be impacted for a prolonged period of time. She said, “It will be a full day though, for sure.”

She explained. Yet indicated they would try to make it as minimal as possible.

Once the details were more clear a plan would be developed and communications would be made with customers.

Councilor Lowe made a motion to award the contract to Cascade Pipeline Corporation, Councilor Joseph made a second. Council voted to award the contract in the amount of \$23,549 to Cascade Pipeline Corporation.

Next Owen spoke about the cured in place pipe bid award.

For the last seven years the Public Works Department has been lining wastewater and storm water pipes throughout Baker City.

The project currently in the works involves portions of Cedar, Colorado, Tracy, Main, 3rd, and “H” Streets. Three bids were received by the August 24, 2016 deadline.

Planned and Engineered Construction, Inc. (PEC) out of Helena, MT. submitted the lowest bid at \$148,850 – under the \$166,783 that was budgeted for the project. Baker City has contracted with PEC for these types of projects before in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015 as Owen states, “With much success.”

Owen asked Council for their approval to award the bid to PEC.

Councilor Lowe moved to award the bid for \$148,850 to PEC. Councilor Joseph seconded the motion followed by a unanimous vote by the Council.

City Manager/Director Comments

Warner told Council he had been on the job now for three months and felt he was settling in well.

He spoke to successes he felt he’d already had, for example, helping to settle a few neighbor disputes and getting Ordinances in place. He also commented on the success of getting Albertsons to return to the community, saying it was “a real benefit.”

He expressed his excitement to continue to work with the YMCA and our community to come to a resolution concerning

the management fee that the YMCA had requested of the City at the last council meeting. He also mentioned an upcoming meeting in October with the DEQ and that he hoped would offer the beginnings of a plan in water management that would begin to evolve. Council was advised that for some time the Red Cross had been housed in the basement of City Hall, at no cost to them and that their lease was coming due for renewal, and unless he heard concerns he would be renewing that no cost lease.

Owen brought attention to the street repairs and overlays the City has been working on in partnership with ODOT.

She also noted the Sam-O Swim Center’s annual maintenance closure was underway and that the heating system replacement was moving along well, the shower replacement was happening as planned and so far, everything was progressing on schedule.

Warner then mentioned that it was “City Hall Week” and Baker City would be hosting an event Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. where topics such as PERS, taxes, and transportation would be discussed in a small intimate setting.

Similar events are happening throughout Oregon Cities all week.

Council Comments

Councilor Thomas reminded Council that the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center was hosting a cast Iron cooking competition on Saturday October 8.

He stated there would be room for eight teams. If interested contact the Interpretive Center.

Councilor Abell added that also on October 8 Taste of Baker would be happening from 4 p.m.-7 p.m.

Councilor Thomas stated to Warner that he should mention his new employee.

Warner replied, “Robin Nudd is joining the City as my executive assistant. She recently has worked for the County and I’m happy to have her.”

Last week’s newsletter from Warner clarified that Nudd will fill the new combined role of Community Developer.

After that, Mayor Mosier adjourned the meeting.

Free osteoporosis seminar to be held Sept. 27

Did you know that one out of every two women, and one in four men, over the age of 50, has low bone density and is at risk for bone fracture associated

with osteoporosis? Or that anyone over the age of 40 can start experiencing bony changes in their upper back that lead to the appearance of forward head posture?

How can you prevent low bone mass (osteopenia), or help yourself avoid further progression of osteoporosis? Attend a seminar Tuesday, September

27, 6 p.m. at the preschool area of the YMCA Fitness Center in Baker City.

Presenter Kim Zinn, DPT, ATC is a physical therapist and certified athletic

trainer at Saint Alphonsus Rehabilitation Services (STARS) in Baker City, OR. She received her Doctorate in Physical Therapy from Pacific University in

2004.

Her undergraduate emphasis was in Sports Medicine as she earned a Bachelor’s degree in Exercise Science in 2001.