

Local

City Council: FBI training

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“But before I begin, I’d like to start out with some public thanks. The City supported me while I was gone, continued to pay my salary. I know Chief Lohner and the other officers had to pick up extra duties while I was gone, obviously, my work can’t go undone while I’m gone. I know my wife is not here tonight but I have to thank my wife, 10 weeks is a long time to be gone.”

Newman noted that the biggest thing he learned while he attended the Academy was that the size of the department didn’t matter big or small.

He said, “The same issues affect law enforcement no matter where you’re at.”

Newman stated he had always believed that to be true but after being with so many diverse departments and being able to talk about that he learned valuable information that made him realize, “Baker City isn’t alone in this” whether it be community concerns, personnel issues, or just trying to get a day off, all of those things are issues across all departments.

He noted, “A message that I heard over and over was that the best thing we can do is to be effective leaders, listen to people, gain respect, make sure you are giving tools and information needed to succeed.”

Newman alluded to the fact that there is so much negativity going on about law enforcement and concluded that to get to that point there had to be a gap somewhere for it to be happening so often in so many communities.

He said, “I know that was one of the most important things I took away from the training and that I’ll strive to be better at.”

Newman explained that he was able to attend six classes at the Academy, one mandatory Physical Fitness Training and five of his choosing.

He said he didn’t choose five classes that he could just put a check mark next to and say he’d done, he carefully chose his classes as interests that would be most beneficial to him and help him grow and help better the Baker City Police Department.

“So, I took some classes that I really didn’t want to take. Some put me in uncomfortable spot but I know I am better for it,” he said.

So, after being back for

about two months Newman says he has already been able to see how his training has been helpful. One example he gave was in interacting with the media.

“That was something that I didn’t think I would’ve needed a class for but it has helped me be able to communicate more effectively with them and make sure that I am getting them the correct information so that that gets to the public. I didn’t realize how important that was until I took a media relations class while I was there,” he said.

He spoke to the Social Media aspect of media relations and said he is working on becoming more Facebook and Twitter savvy. He acknowledges how effective and important it is at getting information to citizens and the community quickly.

“I think for years to come I’ll be able to draw from the experience to not only make myself a better leader but also be able to pass that on to the department and citizens as well,” he said.

The next item on the agenda was a quarterly update from Justice Court however, there were no representatives from the Court present so Council moved to the next item on the agenda.

Public Arts Commission Vinyl Wrap Presentation

Ann Mehaffy, Public Arts Commission Chairman addressed Council about a project that has been in the works for some time.

Utility/Traffic boxes at the intersections of Main and Broadway Streets and Main and Washington Streets have been selected as the two locations for the pilot Vinyl Wrap project. A project that is becoming quite popular around the country, a utility or traffic box is covered or “wrapped” with a durable vinyl coated, anti-graffiti laminate that has high resolution images printed on it. Mehaffy explained that for the Utility box at Main and Broadway a painting by Committee person Brian Vegter depicting Bicyclists competing in a local race was selected for use and for the utility box at Main and Washington Streets an old photo commissioned from the Baker County Library of a local boys choir had been chosen.

She explained that the Commission had been in talks with ODOT, who currently have control over

both boxes and they had agreed to allow the project upon the approval of the images by City Council. City Manager Fred Warner said that ODOT had also requested that some type of official agreement be in place but that agreement was still in the works and Council would see that before any project began.

Councilor Langrell asked Mehaffy, “Did you do an open call to the art community?” in regard to the selection of Vegter’s image and the fact that the commission will pay for use of the image, roughly \$250.

Mehaffy admitted they had not—the Commission alone had decided on the images being used.

Langrell made it quite clear that he felt it very odd that the art community did not have opportunity to submit images and that Vegter’s image was chosen without outside input and he serves on the commission from which he will benefit.

Mehaffy stated that since this was a pilot project they just wanted to see if it was something that was going to be doable. She indicated that a different system would be used to select future images should the project be successful.

Mehaffy advised Council that the Public Arts Commission had a budget of \$4000 and it would cost approximately \$800 for each box with a donation to the Baker County Library for use of their image as well as payment to Vegter for use of his image. The funds were well within their budget, and a local company had been selected to complete the project.

City Manager Warner advised that the commission was free to do what they wished with the money as it had already been budgeted to them and they did not need council approval to use those dedicated funds.

Councilor Lowe said he “had no issues” and was “comfortable moving forward” with the use Vegter’s image, but advised a call out to the local art community would be wise in future projects.

Mehaffy agreed and made it clear that she was there to update Council on what was happening with the project and to seek approval of the images chosen as ODOT has requested.

All Councilors present voted to approve moving forward using the recommended images with the exception of Langrell.

Airport Project Bid

Award Connect Oregon VI and FAA-AIP Project

Public Works Director Michelle Owen addressed Council stating that the FAA had awarded a grant to the City in September and the City has only 120 days in which to award that bid to a contractor.

An additional grant through Connect Oregon has been applied for however, that grant is not expected to be awarded until sometime near the end of December.

The City received two bids back in July when requested for completion of the project which includes reconstruction of the primary apron, improving drainage to the apron and the addition of a new 6,000-gallon jet fuel storage tank.

Owen advised Council that upon review of the proposals she was suggesting the Council award the contract to Knife River Corporation-Northwest, the lowest cost bidder, contingent on receiving the Connect Oregon grant that she is fully anticipating. Councilor Lowe moved to award the contract to Knife River Corporation on the contingency of receipt of the Connect Oregon Grant. A second was heard by Councilor Joseph. The vote to award was unanimous.

City Manager/Director Comments

City Manager Warner did mention to Council that he had received some information from Justice Court Administrator Michael Finney and said he had no idea what could’ve happened that kept him from attending the meeting.

Warner also advised Council that an offer for a six-month interim Fire Chief had been made but he had not yet heard back from that person.

The MAO with the DEQ is still being worked on but Warner said he feels the City will be ready when DEQ is and that he would be attending a County Commissioner work session later in the week where the 911 dispatch center would be a topic of discussion.

Council Comments

Councilor Thomas wished his fellow Councilors the best of luck in the election that was coming to a close that evening. Thomas’ seat was the only seat not up for reelection. Councilors Downing, Abell, Joseph and Lowe were all seeking reelection of their seats. With no other business, Downing adjourned the meeting.

Sumpter City Council

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Clarke motioned and Council agreed to work out a deal with the County to obtain the equipment if possible. Fire Department Report

Jim Sheller reported one medical call out in the past month. He said there was a really good turn out and thanked all who turn out for the calls. Training focus during the winter is on medical.

McKinney thanked Sheller and Dick Malone of the Fire Department for spending a day blowing out culverts with a fire truck. He said it is not easy work and appreciated.

Planning Commission Report

LeAnne Woolf reported that Mr. Meyers turned off extra lights and propane water heater at the Grounds.

The Commission met October 20th and reviewed a zoning application for a fence and shed. They approved the fence and requested more information on the shed. The Commission also worked on goal eight of the comprehensive plan and discussed how marijuana grows fit into the current plan.

The Commission met again on November 3rd. The shed application was withdrawn. They discussed goal nine—economic development. Under the law, marijuana is considered a crop.

The Commission was sent several laws to review. Woolf summarized these for the Council. It is required to hold a hearing and give notice to landowners when rezoning. Passing the marijuana ordinance would be considered rezoning. If it were to be passed without following appropriate land use regulations, for the next ten years, it could be protested to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) who could potentially erase the ordinance from the books and cause the City to start over again.

Marijuana Business Ordinance

After discussion of procedure, reading part of the draft ordinance, and discovering several items that need to be fixed, City Recorder Julie McKinney asked if the proper procedure would not be Council agreeing on the final version they want, removing the word “Draft,” and posting the ordinance publicly.

Catherine Dodgens asked if anything more has been done about polling the people of Sumpter. Rowan stated she has talked with those who want to bring the businesses in and they are putting together a survey. Responses will be anonymous and go into a box. A committee of people will sit down and look at the responses. She said she thinks this will settle a lot of the dissension and will make it apparent what the citizens want.

Jenny Long stated that the process with land use modifications works similarly. Landowners receive notice of a hearing at a particular date and time. They can submit written testimony if they don’t want to attend. The hearing is an opportunity for everyone to testify as to their view on the issues they see and have those issues addressed.

William Cullum stated he’s visited multiple dispensaries in states where they’re legal and said they have all sold crack pipes, torches, and other implements. He mentioned “tweakers” in parking lots opening up other cars while their buddy is inside buying a pipe.

Dennis Farnsworth said their proposed business will not sell pipes or other paraphernalia. They are interested in providing marijuana only.

Clarke asked the discussion be saved for the public input portion of the meeting.

IFA Application for Grant

Julie McKinney stated the Council needs to get together and work on the application grant. They will need to research what they are applying for and how much. This was dropped when the former mayor was recalled. Council scheduled a workshop for Monday, November 14th at 9 AM to address the matter.

Council input

Armbuster said he recommends attending a training to held by the League of Oregon Cities in Ontario in March of next year.

Rowan said they will get the marijuana survey put together and out. Long asked who will receive the surveys and was told property owners in the City limits.

Public input

Ken Gross of Oregon Telephone addressed comments made by City attorney Dan Van Thiel regarding a franchise agreement. Gross said Van Thiel mentioned 20 years being a concern for the length of agreement and said with the last city they bumped the length to ten years. He said there is no hidden agenda. It’s just a pain to renew the agreement, so they try to do so as seldom as possible. They are primarily a telephone company, so a lot of their business is confidential, but here they are talking about reusing coaxial cable, which is visible to everybody. The franchise fee is basically a tax passed on to citizens. Gross said all they ask is that the fee be the same as that used with Century Link or any other similar business to cause an issue with being competitive.

Clarke asked McKinney to write up the proposed changes to send to Gross and asked to add this to the agenda for the upcoming meeting.

Myrna Clarke stated the schoolhouse needs to be deep cleaned. They have talked about getting all the user groups together in late April or early May when it gets warmer to do so. They would like the City to provide cleaning supplies and dispose of the trash and junk as it is moved out. Mayor Clarke suggested a potluck.

Dodgens asked if all outside groups are charged for use of the building. Myrna Clarke stated they all pay, and every group that meets there cleans up after themselves. Mayor Clarke stated he is good with how the honor system has been working. Sheller stated that the money raised by groups using the facility comes back into the community.

Dodgens asked why business licenses are not being put on the agenda and why the Planning Commission can’t approve its own things. Clarke stated they will look into this.

Suspect rescued from badger hole

On November 3, 2016 at about 7:30 a.m., an OSP Trooper was on patrol and located an occupied stolen vehicle, a 2001 Chevrolet Tahoe, in Ontario and attempted a traffic stop in the parking lot of Jack in the Box (4th Street).

The driver drove away, jumping a curb, and then pursued by the Ontario Police Department. The vehicle was pursued for a short distance but terminated due to safety concerns. During the pursuit two males and a dog could be seen occupying the vehicle. Information led police to BLM land near Vale where a search was

conducted by ground and air.

One suspect was located several hours later traveling by foot on the BLM land. The male was identified as Jerry E Boatman, age 35, of Ontario, and was arrested for Escape III and a parole violation.

The search continued and a couple hours later and aircraft located the vehicle in a ravine. Tracks from the vehicle were followed over a mile and the dog was spotted. The dog fled into a large badger hole and would not come out. After getting the dog out, they could hear a male screaming for help from



Submitted Photo.

Morrow being dug by his law enforcement rescuers out of the large badger hole

within the hole. Police discovered Gregory A Morrow, age 22, of Ontario, was stuck approximately 8 feet underground and could not move. He was feet first in the hole and was losing the feelings in his arm.

Police immediately began digging to remove him from the hole. After about

an hour and a half, Morrow was rescued and taken into custody after being identified as the driver of the stolen vehicle. He was briefly taken to Saint Alphonsus Hospital for minor injuries. Following his arrest he was arrested for a parole violation warrant.