

# Local

## City approves new crusher bucket, sale of property

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The Baker City Council met Tuesday, November 22 for a regularly scheduled Council meeting.

With all Councilors present with the exception of Councilor Lowe, Mayor Mosier opened the meeting. Councilor Abell led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by an invocation where she said a few words about being thankful.

Council quickly moved to approve the consent agenda then Mayor Mosier called for Citizen participation of which there was none.

Council then turned its attention to the agenda.

### Justice Court Update

Trial Court Administrator Michael Finney addressed Council stating that in the previous quarter there had been an increase in cases from 162 to 235.

“Looks like business really picked up for the PD,” he joked.

He stated that revenue was up approximately \$2,000 for the quarter, slightly higher than last year at the same time.

“We picked up criminal cases again—the new Deputy District Attorney that came on board last month threw about 15 new cases in our lap right out of the gate,” Finney explained.

He told Council that they have also been down a Court Clerk. The Baker County Tax office shares an employee with Justice Court and since the County is in the midst of property tax season that employee has been solely in the tax office but is expected to return to Justice Court by mid-December.

Finney indicated that he handles the criminal cases and although it has created a bit more work for him “We’re doing just fine,” he said.

Criminal cases being filed in Justice Court are non-person misdemeanor cases only.

### Crusher Bucket Purchase

Michelle Owen, Public Works Director explained to Council that this past

summer a process was done that selected equipment for work on the Mountain Line project.

The selected equipment was then rented, with Council approval, for use on the project.

“It has gone very well,” Said Owen indicating a larger than expected portion had been completed and she did not feel that the crews would have to return to the same area next spring for further work because the process “just worked very well.”

A crusher bucket was among the equipment rented and as Owen said, “During the course of the project, we realized how well the crusher bucket worked to help us just be very efficient. The pressure bucket just attaches to the excavator picks up the rock that’s been dug out and crushes it and makes it into bedding material. We then use that material to bed the pipe and that saves us from having to haul truckloads of rock up there.”

Owen explained that she wasn’t prepared to say one should be purchased at the time of rental because she “hadn’t seen one in action.”

After having used one she feels that it would be in the best interest of the City to purchase rather than rent this piece of equipment based on efficiency and cost effectiveness. Purchasing the equipment vs. renting it repeatedly.

Oregon Tractor and Supply, who the crusher bucket was rented from, approached the City stating they would be willing to sell the crusher bucket and apply all previous rental payments toward the purchase.

The total cost of the crusher bucket is \$76,500. After applying \$18,000 in rental credit the remaining balance to outright purchase the crusher bucket is \$58,500.

Councilor Joseph moved to approve purchase of the crusher bucket with a second heard by Councilor Thomas. Council cast a unanimous vote in favor of the purchase.

### Historic District Design Review Commission Term Extension

Gail Duman, who currently serves on this commission contacted Julie Smith, Human Resources Manager/City Recorder regarding a discrepancy in the way the ordinance reads about the commission term expiations and the way the Duman’s term is currently set to expire.

Duman’s term has been set to expire January 2017.

The term for that seat should not have been set to expire until January of 2018.

According to Smith, it was unclear when or how the mix-up happened but was suggesting that Council extend Duman’s term by one year to realign with the ordinance.

Smith advised Duman was willing to continue her service on the committee.

Councilor Joseph moved to approve extending the term by one year with a second by Councilor Downing.

The motion carried unanimously.

### Salmon Creek Property Sale Approval

City Manager Warner advised Council that an offer on parcel #2, of the 3 available parcels on Salmon Creek, in the amount of \$87,500 had been made with the provisions that the City survey the north and south property lines and they reimburse the buyer for the installation of conduit to provide power to the property at a cost of \$3,330.

Warner explained that the surveying of the property could be done at a very minimal cost by the City Engineer and the purchase of parcel #2 and subsequent installation of power added an important factor for selling parcels #1 and #3.

Having that underground access to power would potentially increase the value of Parcels #1 and #3 and therefore the City could recoup the \$3,300 in the added value for the properties once sold.

He was recommending the Council approve the



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Justice Court administrator Michael Finney and Judge Don Williams addressing Council.

sale.

Councilor Joseph moved to approve the sale with a second by Councilor Downing.

Council voted to unanimously approve the sale of the property for \$87,500 accepting the buyer’s requests.

### City Manager/Director Comments

City Manager Warner suggested to Council that with the changing of Councilors after the first of the year, due to the election and some Councilors terms ending, he would really like to see an Orientation done to help new Councilors understand the inner workings of Council.

He also felt that with some midterm appointed councilors there would be a few that have never been through the budget cycle, including himself, and he felt it would be helpful to shed light on that process as well.

He also indicated the desire to begin looking at dates for some work sessions and goal setting session as soon as possible.

He did note that the actual election results had not yet been certified, but to expect that at the December 13th Council meeting.

Mayor Mosier said

“You’ll have a couple of new Councilors and some newly returning Councilors so getting everybody on the same page early on is smart.”

Mayor Mosier’s term is expiring and she will not be returning in January, as is Councilor Langrell’s term.

Warner also advised Council that Tom Wills has been hired as interim Fire Chief.

Wills, like Mark John the City’s most recent Fire Chief who left November 19th to accept a position in Spokane, WA., is from Anaheim CA.

Wills has over 35 years in Fire/EMS work and is scheduled to begin December 5, 2016.

Until Wills is able to take the helm, Cliff Hall is serving the role as interim Fire Chief.

Wills will serve for a guaranteed six months as the City assesses the position and direction they want to go.

At that time, Wills would be able to apply for a permanent position if he chooses.

Julie Smith spoke briefly to Council regarding an evaluation of City Manager Warner.

She said, “As most

of you remember in the employment contract between the City and the City Manager calls for a performance evaluation after the first six months of employment and then yearly near the anniversary date of hire. With two councilors leaving this would be a good chance to provide feedback.”

She stated she would like to have the evaluations back before the next council meeting, where Council would meet in Executive Session to discuss the matter.

### Council Comments

Councilor Abell reminded everyone about the upcoming Christmas parade followed by the tree lighting.

This year’s theme is “Sleigh bells, Snow and Mistletoe.”

The Parade is Saturday, December 3 at 5 p.m.

Homes for the Parlor tour are still being compiled but will be happening on December 10 from moon to 5 p.m..

Tickets are available at Bella’s, Betty’s Books, The Chamber, Crossroads or the Baker Heritage Museum.

With nothing further, Mayor Mosier closed the meeting.

## Pilot program pairs BTI and DHS locally

In an effort to remove barriers that prevent Eastern Oregonians from developing the skills they need to pursue or grow a career, earn higher wages and provide for their families, Baker Technical Institute (BTI) in partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and local businesses have collaborated to create a program that builds and strengthens the rural workforce.

Using TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) reinvestment dollars, the coalition of private and public stakeholders work to promote self-sufficiency and economically viable

communities. Programs are being offered to provide specific job skills training while addressing the workforce needs of local businesses.

The partnership is focused on providing opportunities to participate in career and technical courses along with skills training in areas that are critical to career success like customer service, professionalism, interviewing skills, resume writing, accountability and teamwork.

The goal is to develop technical career skills and incorporate soft skill components so learners will be more prepared to retain jobs. Following completion

of the training program, students are offered an interview with a local business for which their skills are a match.

“Education is the key to ensuring that Eastern Oregon remains a thriving region, now and in the future,” said Tammy Pierce, program coordinator of Baker Technical Institute. “By implementing collaborative programs that address the workforce training needs of rural businesses with innovative solutions that address the social and economic challenges of poverty, we not only create economic stability but a sustainable future for rural Oregon.”

As an example, since early 2016 BTI has offered three, four-week welding courses that prepare students for an immediate career with Baker City’s Behlen Manufacturing. The company, in turn, provides the materials for the course.

DHS identifies clients to participate in the class and uses TANF dollars to finance their skills education, while also addressing social barriers to education like food, housing and transportation. In addition to instructing welding skills in a replica of the Behlen Manufacturing site, BTI is teaching learners about the importance of

safety, drug and alcohol-free workplace, punctuality and job site visits.

“We understand the critical need for adult learners to have access to job skills training close to home,” said Rhonda Culley, Self-Sufficiency Program Manager. “We were interested in the partnership because of BTI’s innovative and accessible training programs that take weeks, rather than months, to complete, and because of BTI’s existing relationship with employers.”

About Baker Technical Institute:

Baker Technical Institute (BTI) is a leading provider of Career Techni-

cal Education programs focused on developing the next generation of skilled workers, technology innovators, entrepreneurs, and community leaders in rural communities. Headquartered in Baker City, Oregon, BTI offers cutting-edge education and training, leading to certification in high-wage, high-demand careers, such as agricultural sciences, building trades, natural resources/environmental sciences, engineering, health services, welding, and manufacturing.

For more information, go to bakerti.org.

## Community Bank charity drive underway

Community Bank is conducting its annual Charity Drive. The program is an effort to collect funds from the community, to be used in that same community during the holiday season.

Funds collected will be matched at .50 on the

dollar up to a maximum of \$500 in matching funds per branch. Last year, over \$24,000 was able to be dispersed to over ten charities in the region.

Since the Community Bank Charity Drive began in 2010, the total amount

given to area charities now exceeds \$119,500, that’s an average of almost \$20,000 per year.

Charities that will benefit this year: Baker City is collecting for food banks in the Baker City area; College Place & Walla Walla

Branches are collecting for playground at Fort Walla Walla; Elgin branch, for the Elgin Food Bank; Enterprise & Joseph Branches are collecting for the Community Connection Food Bank; Heppner branch is collecting funds for the

Neighborhood Center Food Bank; Hermiston branch is collecting for CASA of Umatilla Morrow County; La Grande Branches are raising funds for the Union County Friday Backpack Program; Milton-Freewater for the City Light and

Power Energy Assistance Program; Pendleton branch is collecting for the Children’s Museum of Eastern Oregon; Wallowa branch collects for the Wallowa Food Bank.

Branches will have jars available through the 20th.