

# Local

## County Departments give updates

### • COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT TO GET NEW GRADER BLADE, NEW FISHING TOURNAMENT PLANNED

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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held its first, regular session of the month, on Wednesday, December 7, 2016, 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, which included departmental updates from Baker County Parks and Recreation Department Director Karen Spencer, and District 8 Watermaster Rick Lusk.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett and Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

Attendance also included Baker County Roadmaster Jeff Smith, District 8 Deputy Watermaster Nathan Petrucci, Baker County Facilities Maintenance Foreman Dan McQuisten, Baker Heritage Museum Board Chairman Hal Huntington, Baker Heritage Museum Board Vice Chair Dave Hunsaker, Baker Heritage Museum Board Secretary Mindy Sherrieb, Ken Anderson, Bobbie Danser, Bruce Nichols, John Creighton, Guy Michael, Chuck Chase, and Tork and Wanda Ballard.

The meeting was called to order, and the optional Invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance were recited, both led by Harvey. The agenda was adopted, with no noted changes, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. There were no comments provided for Citizen Participation.

The minutes from the Wednesday, November 2, 2016 regular session, and the Wednesday, November 9, 2016 special session were approved, with no noted changes, with a motion from Bennett, and a

second from Kerns.

Spencer provided a departmental update, which included, among the details, the following: in June, the busiest month for the department, there was a catastrophic sewer system failure, due to the failure of a high-pressure hose, causing extensive flooding and damage, and it took four weeks to repair, totaling \$17,195.95.

She said that, in July, there was a massive toxic blue-green algae bloom, at Brownlee Reservoir, but it didn't migrate into the Powder River, until late in the season. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) reported that the bloom was recorded at 14,000 points above the allowable limit.

Spencer said that the park season was busy, and self-generated revenue was reported above average. She said that, at the end of fiscal year 2015-2016, self-generated revenue was at \$77,195, which she said was good (the best year, historically, was about \$87,000).

She said that next season, a new fishing tournament, scheduled for May 6, will be a non-motorized canoe and kayak fishing event, and on June 3, the annual panfish tournament will be held.

Spencer used the County's interactive Smart Board to display some slides, one of which helped to explain that pre-cast concrete will be poured when the water level at the Moonshine Mine access ramp site, between Huntington and Richland, is low enough, to change the access level, from 2,052 feet in elevation, to 2,030 feet.

She also thanked members of the Facilities, Road, and Sheriff's departments, for their efforts throughout the season.

Lusk, provided a departmental update, which included, among the details, the following, using the Smart Board, and slides: District 8 comprises 3,254 square miles, and includes Baker County, and the

portion of Union County within the North Powder River, and Wolf Creek drainages.

Primary Water Rights, 3,537, cover an area of 229,420 acres, which breaks down as follows: 2,861 Surface Water Rights, covering 218,631 acres; 226 Groundwater Rights, covering 10,788 acres; and 450 Storage Water Rights. Supplemental Water Rights, 585, cover an area of 154,748 acres, broken down as follows: 350 Surface Water Rights, covering 115,712 acres; and 219 Groundwater Rights, covering 39,036 acres. There are 6,671 diversion points in the District.

A Road Department grader blade purchase request was approved, for Arnold Machinery Company, for a total of \$14,953, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Smith spoke with the Board, prior to approval. According to the request, bids were received from three vendors: Arnold Machinery Company, for \$59.85 each (for 250 blades); Western States, for \$127.18 each (for 181 blades); and Rebuilding & Hardfacing, for \$75.00 each (for 200 blades). Smith said that, traditionally, 1/2" to 5/8" blades have been used, with possibly wearing out two per day, but, because the department will be using the new 3/4" blades, the life of the blades will be extended, and they're the most commonly used thickness. He said that the department sells the seven-foot used blades at a dollar a piece, and many are routinely sold.

Amendment #2 to Oregon Department of Corrections Agreement #520 was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. According to the amendment, the date in Section #21, Implementation and Duration, was changed from January 31, 2017, to January 31, 2022, and all other provisions of Master Agreement #520 shall remain in effect.

Addendum #6 to the Lease Agreement between the County and Sackos Land Company, Ltd., for real property, the Pochontas Medical Office Building, 3330 Pochontas Road, Baker City, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. According to the addendum, the lease agreement, entered into, from July 1, 2009, to July 1, 2016, has expired, and both parties have agreed to an extension, from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017.

A public hearing was held, in the matter of a proposed 2017 Baker County Department Fee Schedule. The Board discussed the different fees proposed in the schedule, with all three commenting about the need to further discuss the fees with department heads. This was the first of two public hearings, and will be continued at another regular session.

A Baker Heritage Museum contract employee discussion was held, with Huntington, Hunsaker, and Sherrieb discussing the matter with the Board. This conversation focused on whether the position of Museum Director should be converted to a contract position, and after some discussion, the decision to convert the position was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Order No. 2016-161, Re-appointing Members To The Mental Health & Developmentally Disabled Advisory Committee, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. According to the order, the following were re-appointed, their terms set to expire on November 1, 2018: Anthony Washington, Staci Erickson, Michael Federly, Jane Chandler, and Rob Dennis.

Order No. 2016-162, Re-appointing Members To The Local Public Safety Coordinating Council Committee, was approved, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Bennett. According to the



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Karen Spencer of Parks and Rec addresses members of the public.

order, Ray Duman was re-appointed, his term set to expire on November 1, 2018.

Order No. 2016-163, An Order Directing The Baker County Sheriff To Make Sale Of County Property; Fixing The Minimum Price And Providing A Portion Of The Conditions And Terms Of Sale, with a motion from Harvey to set the minimum bid at \$7,500, and a second from Bennett. According to the order, the property is identified as a 75x60 bare lot, in Sumpter, Reference #5244, with a real market land value of \$10,580, and \$0 real market structure value. The total of back taxes and estimated expenses is \$2,038.04, and the sale is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, January 24, 2017, 10 a.m., on the steps of the Baker County Courthouse.

Order No. 2016-164, An Order Directing The Baker County Sheriff To Make Sale Of County Property; Fixing The Minimum Price And Providing A Portion Of The Conditions And Terms Of Sale, was approved, with a motion from Harvey to set the minimum bid at \$30,000, and a second from Bennett. According to the order, the property is identified as Reference #3491, 1244 3rd Street, Baker City, with a real market land value of \$29,740, and a real market structure value of \$30,030. The total of back taxes and estimated expenses is \$13,449.59, and the sale is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, February 7, 2017, 10 a.m., on the steps of the Baker County Courthouse.

Order No. 2016-165, another authorization

for the sale of foreclosed property, at 90 W. Washington Street, Huntington, had been removed pending more information, however, the decision was made to combine the two associated tax lots, to be sold at a later date, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Harvey.

A work session had been scheduled for Wednesday, December 14, 2016, with a 911 Dispatch contract discussion on the agenda, however, Bennett cited the need to wait until a work session in January, after Commissioner-elect Nichols replaces current Commissioner Kerns, and the work session was canceled, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Bennett said that the Baker County Planning Commission has not had enough present members to meet the criteria for a quorum for the past two months, there are efforts to advertise for the positions, and he asks that anyone interested contact Martin.

Bennett said a Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) Transmission Line Project public meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 16, 2016, in the afternoon (the time will be determined, and the public will be notified).

An executive session, to discuss Health Department employee details, was held, in accordance with ORS (Oregon Revised Statutes) 192.660 (2)(i).

Martin said that a retirement party for outgoing Commissioner Kerns is scheduled for December 28, 2016, 2 p.m., at the Baker County Courthouse.

## USFS

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Montoya began a PowerPoint presentation on the topic of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision (BMFPR), using the County's Smart Board interactive screen, with Fargo's assistance.

Montoya said in 2003, the USFS began working with counties to develop the Proposed Action, and the public engagement process, followed by the launching of the Forest Plan Revision process in 2004, in the Schedule of Proposed Actions.

He said that from 2004-2009, the USFS scoped, developed, and analyzed Alternatives, in a context of changing Forest Planning Rules (2005, 2008, and 2012).

In 2014, he said the USFS released the Draft EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) and Forest Plans, 14 public meetings followed, with over 1,000 participants, and the formal public comment period had been extended to 150 days.

In 2015, he said that the

USFS re-engaged with the public, at 24 meetings, with over 700 participants, and the meeting notes were published on the project website: fs.usda.gov/goto/BlueMountainsPlanRevision. As a result, in 2016, the USFS decided to analyze two new Alternatives (based on Alternative "E").

Included in the ongoing BMFPR process, is the following, Montoya said: continuing communication with the public and other stakeholders, regarding revisions; cooperating/coordinating with counties and states; consulting with federally recognized Tribes; completing the development and analysis of the two new Alternatives; and consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the National Fisheries Marine Services (NFMS), on potential Endangered Species Act (ESA) issues.

Montoya said that the USFS is consulting informally with the USFWS and the NFMS, however, formal consultation is yet to happen, and he expects this process to delay progress, until sometime in 2017 (the timetable hasn't been determined).

He spoke about address-

ing concerns in Baker County's 2014 formal comment letter, and about addressing priorities in the County's Natural Resources Plan (NRP). Numerous topics were discussed, including livestock grazing, timber harvest, riparian conservation strategy, pace and scale of restoration, and designated routes.

Some of the questions from attendees included:

Chuck Chase said, "I noticed in your Road section, you recognize existing mines...What about new mines?"

Montoya said, "Yes, we would..."

Addison said, "On the slides, when you referred to the 'coordination/cooperation,' there was a slash between those two words, and usually, when there's a slash between two words, it implies, or infers that there's a similar meaning, between the two words."

Montoya said, "That wasn't my intent; they're different things."

An unidentified attendee said, "I've been coming to these meetings for years, and every time I come to one of these things, I feel like I'm going to a foreign land. Everything's an abbreviation. I'm not sure if

the Alternative E is better, worse, than everything else. I've read mountains of this literature...Is this done purposely, to camouflage what's going on? Is this the way the Forest Service employees speak to each other, like a secret code?"

Montoya said, "The intent is not to confuse you. I'm sorry if some of the acronyms, and that kind of lingo, did that; we will work on trying to make these kinds of presentations a little bit better explained...The Alternative E, modified, I think, is a better Alternative, in terms of more timber harvest on the landscape..."

Danser said, "You proposed these new Alternatives; does that mean that you're going to re-open the comment period, to comment on the new Alternatives, or, does that mean it's just pulling wool over their eyes, and you're still going to go with the Alternatives that you prefer?"

Montoya said, "The new Alternatives will not go through public comment."

Danser said, "Why not?"

Montoya said, "Because we tried to formulate that, based on the foundation of the Preferred Alternative..."

There's nothing outside of the scope of what we already addressed, in terms of the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) analysis..."

Stroy said, "I'm confused about something here; all of the Alternatives you've got have not been in coordination with the County. Now, you've got a new E Alternative, and, you're not coordinating, and, if you aren't, why is that?"

Montoya said, "We are coordinating; we have been coordinating."

Harvey interjected that, "Not technically; you've been taking our comments, but we haven't sat down and worked things out ... To his (Montoya's) credit ... The County was not involved in coordination back then (in 2003)... The County did not step up... It's fairly new to Mr. Montoya, and myself... We are going to coordinate; we have not gotten to that point yet..."

Among the comments and questions from the Board, Harvey read items from a handout titled "Forest Service Revision Plan," which included a discussion about the purpose of, and procedure for the coor-

dination process. He read the following: "Purpose: (NFMA, or National Forest Management Act) The Secretary of Agriculture shall develop, maintain, and, as appropriate, revise land and resource management plans for units of the National Forest System, coordinated with the land and resource management planning processes of state and local governments." He said, "This is the law—this is the Forest Service law. So, we need to back up, and do that, and follow through."

Montoya said, "What do you mean by 'back up'?"

Harvey said that the County needs to be allowed to be more actively involved in the process, and not just in a position of providing comments.

Harvey continued: "Procedure: Notify Baker County of any proposed action prior to the initial planning phase of the proposed action." He said, "Again, we weren't notified that you were going to do this, and involving us from the beginning."

Montoya said, "Again, I think we followed the procedure."

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