

Local

City Council seats full again

BY GINA K. SWARTZ
Gina@TheBakerCountyPress.com

The regular City Council meeting on February 14 began with Mayor Downing calling the meeting to order at precisely 7 p.m. with all Councilors present.

City Council Appointments

Two seats on Council were vacant due to the departure of Daniel Lowe on Jan. 13, 2017 and Jaime Ostrander on Jan. 24, 2017. Three people applied to fill the two open seats Dan McQuisten, Daniel Buck and Adam Nilsson. Each candidate attended the Council Orientation on Jan. 31, 2017 at which time Council decided to wait to appoint until the next official meeting. Just prior to the February 14, 2017 meeting Smith received a withdrawal letter from Daniel Buck.

Councilor Joseph moved that McQuisten and Nilsson be appointed. A second to that motion was heard by Councilor Thomas with a unanimous vote cast by Council. McQuisten and Nilsson were sworn in by Smith and took their seats with Council for the remainder of the meeting.

Consent Agenda

Downing called for a motion to approve the minutes from the last regular Council meeting held January 24, 2017, with no corrections or changes noted. Councilor Thomas moved for approval. Councilor Joseph seconded then the motion was unanimously passed.

Citizen's Participation

There was no citizen participation.

FBLA Week

Downing read a proclamation declaring February 13, 2017 thru February 17, 2017 FBLA Week. Ashlie Chastain of BHS FBLA was present to accept the signed proclamation.

Boards and Commission Appointments

A. Parks and Recreation – One vacant seat. Kim Mosier applied.

B. Historic District Design Review Commission – Two vacant seats. Daniel Buck applied.

C. Planning Commission – Two Vacant seats. Shem Carlson applied.

D. Economic Development Committee - The City and the County have been working together to expand this committee. At the last County Commissioners meeting five new members were appointed. The appointees have been presented to the City for approval as per a City/County contract. Those appointees are Karen Owen, Martin Arritola, Scott Thatcher, Tyler Brown and Randy Daugherty.

City Manager Fred Warner advised Council of the desire to have at least one realtor on the committee, but it could wait until next time there were vacancies.

Joseph moved to appoint all volunteers to the position applied for and approve the five appointees to the Economic Development Committee. Abell oved to second the motion with a unanimous vote cast. Seats are still available on the Historic District Design Review Commission and the Planning Commission interested persons should contact Julie Smith for more information and an application

at 541.524.2033

Task Order #11 Wastewater Facility Plan

Public Works Director Michelle Owen was unable to attend this City Council meeting therefore Warner addressed Council on the matter. The City recently entered an MAO with DEQ which requires an update to the wastewater facility plan. That plan must be completed by December 31, 2017 and will address both wastewater effluent disposal land application feasibility study and the wastewater facility plan update.

The City already has a professional services contract with Anderson Parry for engineering services as needed. Brett Moore with Anderson Parry has worked with the City on various water projects over the last ten years and has extensive knowledge of the City's system will serve as project manager of the project.

Anticipated costs for these services is \$100,000. Dollars were allocated in the budget for these projects and to date one grant in the amount of \$20,000 has been received and another in the amount of \$30,000 is anticipated. Thomas moved to approve the task order. Joseph made the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Third Reading of Ordinance #3352 Modification to Dangerous Dog Ordinance #3327 and Third Reading of Ordinance #3353 Modification to Truancy Ordinance #2976

Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner addressed Council stating no further input had been received regarding the proposed changes to the Dangerous Dog Ordinance that would give the hearings officer and or Judge more flexibility with rulings and the ability to authorize euthanasia if necessary.

Smith read the ordinance for the third time by title only. A unanimous vote passed the modification. An emergency declaration was included in the modification that will allow the changes to become effective immediately.

Lieutenant Dustin Newman of the BCPD then addressed Council regarding proposed changes to the Truancy Ordinance that will allow the School Resource Officer as well as other officers better options in handling truancy and curfew issues.

Joseph stated, "I've had citizens approach me concerning this have you heard any feedback?"

Newman advised the only feedback he'd heard was from school administration asking when this could take effect.

Newman stated there was a declaration of emergency added to the proposed changes that would also allow it to take effect immediately. Smith again read the ordinance by title only for the third time. Again, Council voted to unanimously approve.

Budget Resolution

Jeanie Dexter, City Finance Director, spoke to Council asking for a Budget Resolution to allow transfer of an additional \$150,000 from an unappropriated ending fund balance. Due to the unprecedented snowfall, the costs for snow removal and maintenance have



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Adam Nilsson and Dan McQuisten bring sworn in.

far exceeded the amounts budgeted. At the January 24, 2017 meeting a state of emergency was declared. ORS 294.481 allows for any funds to be made available in the event of an emergency including unappropriated ending fund balances. Dexter noted that all the final numbers were not yet in as far as complete costs due to payroll issues and the fact that it was only mid-February and in all likelihood, there would be additional snow requiring the City's resources before the winter season ended.

Dexter advised that at that January 24th meeting Public Works Director Michelle Owen had agreed money from her street fund allocation could be utilized, however after closer consideration felt in this particular situation unappropriated ending fund balance dollars were a better choice that would allow projects already slated in her department be continued. Thomas agreed that it was a better choice to allow for already funded public works projects to proceed uninterrupted. He then made a motion to approve the Budget Resolution with a second heard by Joseph. The motion passed by unanimous Council vote.

Adopting Revised Public Contracting Regs

Dexter advised Council that City Attorney Brian DiFonzo had been asked to review new federal regulations related to the Uniform Grant Guidance for federal awards and incorporate them into the City's public contracting regulations. In addition, he was asked to review the regulations for any other federal or state law or other suggested changes. This is an important update due to the Airport apron project which will be funded in part by federal dollars and a review of the City's public contract

Regulations are subject to review prior to receiving the funds. Dexter also noted a resolution passed in 2013 decreasing the limit the purchase manager (City Manager) was authorized to spend without prior approval that was decreased from \$50,000 to \$20,000. Dexter advised Council they may wish to raise that limit once again to \$50,000 and that most of those purchases consisted of vehicles. Warner assured Council any item that was close to the limit he intended to seek Council approval first anyway.

Joseph motioned to approve the resolution and restore purchases made by the City Manager back to \$50,000. A second was heard by Abell. Council agreed by unanimous vote.

Development Code

Planning Director Holly Kerns presented to Council advising that updates and minor changes to the code are necessary from time to

time. The last update was done in 2015. This update includes corrections of clerical errors, omissions, and inconsistencies including document structure changes.

According to Kerns, Baker City Development Code also requires updates to reflect relevant court cases and changing community conditions. Aside from the clerical errors, the majority of the minor changes include things like signs in residential areas concerning businesses, a minor change in structure sizes to be more consistent with building standards in residential area and RV allowances such as how long an RV can be occupied on residential property or city streets. As required a series of work sessions were held with ample public notice given. The Department of Land Conservation and Development were duly notified of proposed amendments, at least 45 days before changes are planned. Property owners were notified by mail at least 20 days before the first public hearing. City Council is required to hold a public hearing before the first reading of the ordinance.

Downing then opened a public hearing however with no one present to testify the hearing was closed. Councilor Thomas stated it was his opinion "the majority of changes appeared to be housekeeping."

Downing asked Kerns if her public meetings had been "Well attended?" to which she replied attendance had been on the low side. Joseph moved for a first reading of the ordinance updates. Thomas seconded and with all Councilors agreeing to a reading. Warner read in full the ordinance. Joseph then moved to accept the first reading with Abell voicing the second for that motion. Council was unanimous in their acceptance of the first reading. Joseph then moved for a second reading by title only that was seconded by Thomas. All of Council agreed. Warner then read again the ordinance by title only. Abell moved to accept the second reading with a second by Thomas. All Councilors voted in favor. A third reading is set for the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

Manager Comments

Warner congratulated the newly appointed Councilors.

Dexter advised she would be scheduling a budget orientation meeting soon and seeing as how all City Councilors are Budget officers the orientation was extremely important.

Councilor Comments

Downing advised that He and Councilor Abell had spent time recently in Salem meeting with legislators where topics included PERS and the Chaves call center.

Sumpter City shop collapses



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

The collapsed City shop.

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH

Meghan@TheBakerCountyPress.com

As of last Monday afternoon, Sumpter Utility Manager Jeff McKinney said he could think of about seven structures right off hand that had collapsed due to heavy snow loads. Those include two homes and the City shop.

No one was injured, though one couple vacated their home just fifteen minutes before the roof crashed into the living room. McKinney said Sammi Rowan, local Red Cross liaison, worked with Chris Galiszewski to ensure those whose homes collapsed received all necessary assistance.

Sumpter City council held an emergency meeting Saturday after the City shop caved in. They declared an emergency and named McKinney emergency coordinator. McKinney said the insurance adjuster is booked up and not available right away but had them go ahead with getting contracts to extricate equipment.

Items in the shop at the time of collapse included the snowplow, backhoe, antique fire truck, and various shop equipment. The backhoe was extricated and McKinney said though it is damaged, including hydraulic leaks and bent components, it is still usable. The extent of damage to the other equipment had not yet been assessed as recovery efforts are ongoing.

McKinney said, "Baker County saved our bacon. Jeff Smith and Baker County Road Department are the best." The county not only agreed to let Sumpter borrow their road grader, but within two hours of the call on Saturday had a grader operator in Sumpter. He plowed the city out, allowing McKinney and local resources to focus on the shop.

One end of the shop is still standing, with McKinney estimating about 90% destroyed. He said the shop roof had been cleaned of snow previously, but challenging elements, including 12 inches of wet snow received in one night, have made it difficult to keep up. He said there are two individuals keeping track of the accumulative totals for Sumpter and that they are up to 120 inches of snow for the year.

All other City buildings are fine, and McKinney said he would like to urge everyone to get the snow off their roofs. Sumpter's high percentage of residences occupied only in summer or as vacation homes pose a special challenge. McKinney said they are "constantly on the phone," letting people know their buildings are bulging, twisting, or sagging.

McKinney also mentioned the need to keep a pencil-thin stream of water running. He said people think that because the air warms up, it's okay to turn their water off, not realizing that the frost in the ground runs four feet deep. As of Tuesday morning, there were six freeze-ups. The process to get water restored is labor intensive, including excavation of the frozen ground.

Cary Clarke, mayor and owner of Clarke Construction, has also been putting in long hours assisting McKinney and many others in the area. McKinney said Clarke is out working "from dark to dark" using his own equipment and with much of his labor volunteer. On Tuesday morning, McKinney pointed out a home that had been bulging from snow accumulation the day before. Clarke had used his equipment to remove the snow. Clarke also removed snow from the top of a City water tank, helping ensure continued water service to local residents.

Speaking Wednesday morning, February 15th, Mayor Clarke said all the rolling stock has been recovered from the City shop. Clarke said the weight of the snow coming down was amazing. It crushed pumps, battery chargers, and saws. He estimated about half of the hand tools in the structure were damaged.

The snowplow is safe to run again, though Clarke said it's "not pretty." Lights and exhaust pipes were knocked off but the plow is patched back together. The antique fire truck is also salvageable, though it is bent up and Clarke said it will definitely need some body work.

'Odd Couple' to run over weekend

Neil Simons great hit "Odd Couple, Female Version" will run one more weekend at the Iron Gate Theatre in the Basche Mall. Produced by the Eastern Oregon Regional Theatre it will run this Friday(17th) and Saturday night(18th) at 7pm and Sunday Matinee(20th) at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$12 Adults, \$10 members and \$8 students and are available at Betty's Books, on line at bakerlivetheatre.com and at the door. This show is rated PG 13.