

Opinion / Local

— A NOTE TO OUR READERS —

On Friday night we lost the eldest member of our Editorial Board, Ann “Bebe” Ellis Racey of Bridgeport. Because we’re a small family-owned company, Bebe was also our beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother—and absolutely irreplaceable. She passed at 95.5 years old, and lived alone, maintaining her independence, sense of humor and political opinions up until nearly the time of her death. Hers was an amazing life, and she was beautiful.

We’re still shell-shocked and in the process of making arrangements, which include the writing of her obituary. We have that print tribute planned for her, so please look for it in the next issue.

—Kerry McQuisten, Editor

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Government seems “above the law” on wolf issues

To the Editor:

After reading the article about the “Wolf Depredation Compensation Committee” meeting in the March 31st issue of *The Baker County Press* newspaper, I am really puzzled about something.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service stole \$60,000,000 from the taxpayers out of the Pitman Robertson Tax Fund, for the capture and introduction (and the word is NOT re-introduction, because they were never here at any time in history) of Canadian Wolves into Yellowstone Park and the state of Idaho. This was totally against the wishes of the people of those states.

Now it seems that it is the responsibility of cattle ranchers to spend money to deter these killing machines from taking their cattle. And apparently from what I read in this article, when they do lose cattle to these wolves, there is some doubt that their losses are actually as bad as they claim because: “While the committee members agree that there are more than three wolves in Baker County, ODFW’s stance-and Barber’s-are that there are three, and the documentation needs to be complete, and Barber needs to be convinced that the missing livestock claims are realistic.”

In my opinion, Barber needs to be fired, and the ODFW needs to stop lying about

the number of wolves these morons have shoved down our throats. To think that there are only three wolves in all of Baker County is complete stupidity, and a lie!

So here we are. An arm of the Federal Government stole money from the taxpayers, because Congress would not fund this debacle. Paid with this stolen money to have these wolves put here against our wishes. And now the cattle ranchers, who never had this problem until the Federal Government interfered, are put on the spot and questioned about the validity of their losses. And what does the Federal Government do, awards the entire state of Oregon a sum of \$150,000.00 to \$160,000.00 to cover their losses, while at the same time runs up our debt to twenty some trillion dollars!!

Now if you or I were to go out and start shooting cattle owned by these ranchers, we would be put in jail and certainly have to pay for the cattle we killed, as we should have to. But not the government. These same Federal agencies are obviously “Above the Law,” and that has become very apparent in the past 10 years hasn’t it?

Can someone, anyone explain the logic and legality of this to me? I sure wish someone could.

Jim Scott
Baker City

City Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Dexter also told Council fees regarding the Fire Department were included in proposed increases this year. Both water fee increases and Fire Department increases were “significant” as Dexter put it.

Baker City Fire Chief Tom Wills addressed Council stating that he was proposing to change the way they billed for some services.

He advised Council that the price for all transports were the same and he wanted to change that. The price of everything is increasing and that includes supplies and pharmaceuticals.

Transports vary from BLS (basic life support) to ALS (Advanced Life Support). Wills thinks that a BLS transport should not be as expensive as an ALS transport since those ALS transports require more of their supplies and pharmaceuticals.

Another fee change he was suggesting was what he called a lift fee. He explained that fee to Council saying that it was the company policy of some of the Care Centers in Baker City to not pick up a resident who had fallen.

He stated they were called out “sometimes twice a day” just to help someone back into bed or a chair that they had rolled out of.

He felt that perhaps a charge to those care facilities might help cut down on those types of calls.

Linda Hudson, who has worked in home health care, addressed Council saying that the lift service

provided was very valued and appreciated but agreed with Wills that a fee for that service was in her opinion “appropriate.”

As it is now, nothing is charged unless a resident is transported to the hospital.

Wills also expressed concern over out of town calls they respond to and transports they often make to the Boise area.

Those calls can take anywhere from four to five hours to over eight hours or more depending on the weather. While staff is out doing those transports, additional staff must be called into to cover the fire station.

Wills noted that Medicare and Medicaid paid a set amount and since the majority of Baker City’s population were these types of transports there was little that could be done there.

Wills said he was just trying to make this Department their best.

“I have an obligation to give this community my best,” he said. “Our citizens deserve the best.”

Cemetery fees are also proposed increases. Dexter advised Council that before any decisions were made on fees there would need to be further opportunity for public comment but did indicate they would need to be in place before July 1, 2017.

Dexter also told Council of a project she has been working on that will allow water/sewer customers to receive bills by email in lieu of the traditional USPS mail.

For those that wish to sign up for that service she is offering a \$1 discount off their bill. Up to two email addresses can receive one bill. The Baker City Water Department can be contacted for more information or to sign up call 541.523.6541.

Approval of Sale of Pine View Lots 1 & 3

Lots in the Salmon Creek area that were previously acquired for water projects have been listed for sale. Lot 3 received a \$85,000 cash payment offer and Lot 1 received a Deed of Trust offer.

That offer is \$19,000 cash down at closing, Elkhorn Title Company will hold the deed of trust and collect the monthly payment of \$407.98 and the buyer will pay an additional 5% interest.

The deed of trust balloon payment will become payable in full on or before June 9, 2020. Downing stated that because he works for Elkhorn Title he will have no dealings in this transaction or collection of any monies to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Councilor Dan McQuisten moved to accept the offers. Thomas made a second. Council voted unanimously. The matter of a resolution authorizing Warner to act on behalf of the City on the matter was necessary. Upon a motion by Joseph and a second by Nilsson. Council unanimously passed the resolution.

City Manager/Director Comments

Warner is waiting on final budget documents and expected to see them very soon. Owen mentioned receiving a request to change parking limits on 1st Street between Valley and Auburn.

Dexter stated auditors had finished the City’s audit and would be at the next meeting to answer any questions.

Council Comments

Joseph said he had a conversation earlier in the day that included the possibility of a Boys and Girls type of club here, and thought it would be a good thing to add to Council Goals.

City goals



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

L-R: Community Development Coordinator Robin Nudd, Fire Chief Tom Wills, and Police Chief Wyn Lohner.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Setting goals helps the City develop a vision to guide the community. Setting these goals is also beneficial for budgeting purposes, for which the City is preparing.

Budget meetings are scheduled to begin in May.

The Council began by reviewing last year’s goals and hearing updates on the progress.

Goals set by the Council last year included support for parks and outdoor spaces, promoting communication and collaboration with community partners and government agencies, development of a wastewater disposal plan, enhancing community livability, evaluation and enhancement of economic development plans, implementation of an asset maintenance schedule, increasing citizen involvement, maintaining and enhancing water security, promoting government integrity and requiring cost effective budget management.

Within each of the goals were certain tasks that were of focus.

Tasks within the goal of supporting parks and outdoor spaces included

securing a new concessionaire service that would promote sustainability for the golf course.

A new contract has been secured thus achieving that task. Another task within that goal was to seek funds to complete Court Plaza. According to Public Works Director Michelle Owen no grant was secured and she is unaware of any available but will continue to search.

Council agreed to keep this as an ongoing goal saying the upkeep and maintenance of these parks and pathways was important. Owen also agreed to continue to explore expansion opportunities for the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway and explore ways to increase access and the use of Central Park.

The goal of communicating and collaborating with community partners had tasks of completing 911 contract revisions and encouraging combined meetings with other local entities.

That task has seen revisions to 911 contracts and the City has held several combined meetings with County Commissioners and Community Development Coordinator Robin Nudd has held meetings regarding the implementa-

tion of the Main Street Program.

Council agreed to keep this as an ongoing goal seeing the value of communication and partnerships.

The Goal of developing a wastewater disposal plan had tasks that included regular communications with DEQ which has been accomplished, an MAO was entered into recently that requires steady progressive action on the City’s part and identifying viable wastewater options, which Owen is doing by having wells and new well sites assessed and exploring land application as a wastewater disposal source. This goal is ongoing.

Enhancing community livability had tasks that saw completion as well. Council agreed to support police-worn body cameras by allocating budget dollars for that equipment.

Chief Lohner said the cameras were now being utilized and seem to be working well.

The City also supported a primary ambulance transport agreement with the hospital.

SEE CITY GOALS
PAGE 5

Letter to the Editor Policy: The Baker County Press reserves the right not to publish letters containing factual falsehoods or incoherent narrative. Letters promoting or detracting from specific for-profit businesses will not be published. Word limit is 375 words per letter. Letters are limited to one every other week per author. Letters should be submitted to Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com.

Advertising and Opinion Page Disclaimer: Opinions submitted as Guest

Opinions or Letters to the Editor express the opinions of their authors, and have not been authored by and are not necessarily the opinions of The Baker County Press, any of our staff, management, independent contractors or affiliates. Advertisements placed by political groups, candidates, businesses, etc., are printed as a paid service, which does not constitute an endorsement of or fulfillment obligation by this newspaper for the products or services advertised.

— CONTACT US —

The Baker County Press

PO Box 567
Baker City, Ore. 97814

Open Monday-Thursday for calls
9 AM - 4 PM
Open 24/7 for emails

Phone: 541.519.0572

TheBakerCountyPress.com

Kerry McQuisten, Publisher
Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Wendee Morrissey, Advertising and Sales
Wendee@TheBakerCountyPress.com

David Conn, Advertising and Sales
David@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Published weekly every Friday.
Subscription rates per year are \$29.95 all areas, e-mail delivery. \$39.95 print issue, home delivery, Baker City city limits only. \$49.95 print issue, mail delivery, outside Baker City city limits only. Payment in advance.

A division of
Black Lyon Publishing, LLC

Copyright © 2014 -2017

YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

President Donald Trump

202.456.1414
202.456.2461 fax

Whitehouse.gov/contact

US Sen. Jeff Merkley

503.326.3386
503.326.2900 fax

Merkley.Senate.gov

US Sen. Ron Wyden

541.962.7691
Wyden.Senate.gov

US Rep. Greg Walden

541.624.2400
541.624.2402 fax

Walden.House.gov

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown

503.378.3111
Governor.Oregon.gov

State Rep. Cliff Bentz

503.986.1460

State Sen. Ted Ferrioli

541.490.6528

Baker County Commissioners Bill Harvey; Mark Bennett; Bruce Nichols

541.523.8200
541.523.8201