

Local



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Tree City USA presentation with Tree Board members Mayor Downing and Teresa Gustafson.

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She stated that their group would be having a meeting to discuss ideas.

“That meeting is scheduled for May 11th at 6 p.m. at Lefty’s Tap house to discuss this and figure out if the community might support this. He left me some invitations that I can pass out to you. I’m excited. I will keep you updated on any progress that’s made,” said Nudd.

Warner then said, “I didn’t know if any Councilors had any questions about the list of goals. If you are so inclined we have a resolution to adopt the goals.” Mayor Downing asked Council if there were any questions or discussion regarding the goals. Hearing none, he stated, “I think you did a great job getting these on paper.”

Council voted unanimously to adopt the goals by passing resolution 3791.

Appoint Volunteers to the 911 Advisory Board

The City and the County recently adopted a new 911 Intergovernmental agreement for 911/Consolidated Dispatch services.

This agreement call for the appointment of two additional board members. At a meeting last week, the County Commissioners approved the appointment of Diane Arvey and Robert Gentilli. The matter was now before Council to approve.

Both Arvey and Gentilli were present at the Council meeting to answer any questions and for Council to meet.

Council had no questions for Arvey or Gentilli and upon a motion by Councilor Abell that was

seconded by Joseph, a unanimous vote was cast appointing them to the board.

Downing abstained from the vote as he stated he was an employee of the 911 Center thus making it a potential conflict of interest for him.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Well Usage Report

Public Works Director Michelle Owen kept this matter quite brief stating that an annual public meeting is required by the permit issued in 2009 to inform the public of plans are for injection as well as usage.

“I just want to let Council know we are allowed to store 200 million gallons underground. We have already met that level. I am also to give a guess as to how we may use the well during the summer months,” she explained. “I guess we will use it as needed.”

She indicated that the City has been able to use the streams and diversions and hasn’t needed to use the well thus far.

“I do anticipate needing to use the well during the summer to meet peak daily demand as we typically have in August and September,” she said.

She advised Council that recently staff visited Goodrich (in the watershed) to get an idea of how things looked there.

The lake there is expected to fill, with an estimated six feet of snow still on the ground in the area. Owen stated that the six feet of snow is more typical of February and it is now mid-April.

She asked Council to ensure that public comment be heard prompting Mayor Downing to officially open

a public hearing. With no one at the meeting to comment Downing immediately closed the public hearing.

Modifying Downtown Parking Discussion

Owen advised Council that she wasn’t prepared to go forward with the matter currently. “I haven’t been able to accomplish what I had hoped to bring this as a full discussion,” she said.

The matter was prompted by a business owner recently and is in regard to time limit parking on 1st Street between Valley and Auburn.

A new downtown organization that is working with the Main Street USA program has been formed with a newly created board.

Nudd has been working with downtown businesses to get this program in place.

She said, “We officially have a new downtown organization Baker City Downtown. They held elections last Wednesday the 19th.”

The organization has five board members: Tori Brown, Beverly Calder, Heather Isaacson, Jenny Mowe-Joseph, and Rick Stout.

That board will meet next week and according to Owen she intends to take the matter before them as she felt it important for them to weigh in.

She said after that meeting she would be prepared to come before Council for consideration of any changes.

Watershed Letter to the USDA Forest Service

As discussed in a prior meeting City Manager Warner and Councilor Andersen worked together to draft a letter to the Forest Service in an effort to begin moving forward in

efforts to better manage conditions of the City’s watershed.

Andersen added he had asked the County’s Natural Resources Advisory Committee for a letter in support, and they had agreed, but County Commissioners had opted to wait until the Council talked about the issues further.

Andersen stated that he would “expect the Commissioners to support the decision if we decide to move forward.”

Councilor Joseph moved to approve the signing of the letter and obtain approval from the County Commissioners.

A second was heard by Councilor Thomas. Council voted unanimously.

City Manager/Director Comments

Warner quickly mentioned that he had sent a letter to the City’s third-party ambulance billing company, stating that their contract would not be renewed.

He also stated he had just that evening received a copy of the tentative budget that he would be going through in the next couple of weeks in preparation of budget sessions.

He also advised of an economic development meeting scheduled for Thursday at Baker Technical Institute followed by a tour of the facility.

Owen added, “Yes we are doing work on Auburn and we will continue to do work on Auburn until September.”

She also apologized that it was a little inconvenient to get to the meeting due to work on Auburn Street by City Hall.

Council Comments

With no Council Comments Downing adjourned the meeting.

Burglaries

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Paradise Truck Wash lost \$50 in cash, and Gene’s Mobile Truck Repair was taken for \$1,500 worth of items, but no cash.

At first blush it appears the culprit was looking for easy cash because larger, more valuable items such as computers were left untouched.

Police have obtained physical evidence and are actively pursuing the suspects in this case, said Newman.

OTEC to test power poles

Over the next few months, OTEC power poles will be getting a spring cleaning ...of sorts.

Osmose Utility Services, a contracted service with OTEC, will begin inspecting and testing approximately 4,300 power poles in the southern and western areas of La Grande, all of the south Baker/Pleasant Valley area, along the Sumpter Highway, portions of the Hines area in Harney County and the area between Mt. Vernon to the end of the line in Dayville.

“They will be all across our 4-county service territory,” said OTEC’s Director of Operations and Engineering Ned Ratterman. “The testing requires digging around our power poles and this means that in some instances Osmose employees will be working in OTEC members’ yards and maybe even driving a 4-wheeler across open fields testing each power pole.”

Ratterman noted the workers will be wearing clothing clearly identifying them as Osmose employees and their trucks will also have OTEC contractor signs.

“Osmose crews will be going from pole to pole to pole,” added Ratterman. “And some poles are right behind houses. With 3,032 miles of line on the OTEC system and a grand total of 43,667 power poles to inspect, that is a lot of fields, yards and grazing land to cover.”

“OTEC and Osmose will both be doing their very best to make contact with each property owner,” said Ratterman. “But if a rancher is out irrigating in the fields or a family isn’t home for one reason or another, we are just wanting to give a heads up that they will be working in the area.”

OTEC’s power pole plan calls for each poles to be inspected and treated on a 10-year cycle. Approximately 10 percent of the system is inspected each year to identify any poles that need to be replaced and to extend the lives of those poles that remain in service. “This inspection helps to safely maintain reliability and keeps costs down for our members,” Ratterman said.

If members have any questions or concerns, please contact your local OTEC office.

Grant deadline announced

The Baker County Cultural Coalition is welcoming grant applications for the current round of Cultural Participation Grants with funding made possible by the Oregon Cultural Trust. The deadline is May 15, 2017.

The Baker County Cultural Coalition is a nine-member planning committee appointed by the Baker County Commission to serve the goals of the Oregon Cultural Trust. A primary purpose of the coalition is to re-grant funds it receives from the Cultural Trust to local arts, humanities and heritage projects. Applicants may only receive grant awards once during the year. New grant applications will not be considered if grant reports from prior awards have not been received. All recipients must submit a grant report indicating how funds were used by October 31st.

The Oregon Cultural Trust designates one-third of the funds it distributes as Cultural Participation Grants to cultural coalitions in Oregon’s 36 counties and nine federally recognized tribes. These funds are to be used for cultural activities and priorities, and local programs that increase access to cultural resources and opportunities.

To obtain a grant application, visit www.bakercounty.org/cultural_plan/grants.html. Forms must be completed, hand delivered to a Coalition Board Member or e-mailed (preferred) to bccc@bakercounty.org by May 15th.



Thank you!

The family of Ann “Bebe” Ellis Racey would like to give thanks to the wonderful nursing staff and Drs. Richards, Lamb and Carroll at St. Alphonsus Medical Center—Baker City for their kindness and care.

We would also like to thank everyone for their compassionate calls, texts, emails, cards, letters, flowers and food during our time of sorrow.

Special thanks go to Bebe’s longtime friend and CPA, Dale Bingham, who spoke so well graveside, as well as to casket bearers Keith Jones, Mike Pace, Mark Bennett, Dennis Kiely, Charlie Wendt, Arvid Andersen and Wyn Lohner, and finally to honorary casket bearers Don Bishop, Larry Bishop, Gary Bishop, and Congressman Greg Walden. You are all appreciated more than you know.