

# Opinion / Politics

## Note to readers

My apologies in advance, but due to family obligations, the June 16, 2017, issue of *The Baker County Press* will not be released on that Friday as usual.

I realize other weeklies occasionally skip a print run, but that practice is something I have always tried to avoid.

During that week I will be in Boise at St. Luke's Children's Hospital while my

five-year-old daughter has surgery, then caring for her afterward. Needless to say, my mind won't be on books or newspapers that week.

BCP reporters will continue to cover stories from that week—and I'll run them together with articles the following week in what is likely to be a larger paper, combining two issues.

To help make up for the inconvenience, I'm also bumping the subscription end-dates for subscribers back a week.

Thanks for your understanding. I'll print a reminder closer to June 16 so no one is caught off guard.

— *Kerry McQuisten, Editor*

## — EDITORIAL —

## Public safety fee should be avoided

It's not wise to try to fee and spend a community into economic balance. That mentality should be avoided, so we understand the uproar behind the proposal for Baker City to adopt a new public safety fee in order to eliminate the "potential" for cuts to our local police and fire departments. That fee would be \$10 for businesses and \$5 for homes per month.

As if ballooning water bills weren't already enough for most low-income folks.

The City, through increased PERS costs, decreased ambulance billing/collections, etc., is facing a more than \$500K budget shortfall within the General Fund after looking at its preliminary budget.

Preliminary. Not finalized.

Quite honestly, there's very little fat to trim in either the Fire Department or Police Department, and from what we've witnessed over the past few years, those

budgets have been managed pretty well.

In our opinion, first looking to the two departments that house our first responders, with the threat of officer and EMT/firefighter cuts to convince the public to quickly accept another fee, is a no-go.

We suggest that the Budget Board dig deeper into the preliminary budget during its upcoming meetings with the idea of cutting actual responder positions completely off the table for right now.

When we make the following suggestions, they are not personal in nature to any employee in City Hall. They are strictly made in looking at numbers and priority of services to the community. Administration falls under the General Fund. So does Community Development. So do Parks, Cemetery, Airport, Planning... Look at salaries and task duplication.

The problem is some higher dollar staff positions and/or line items with more wiggle-room for budget cutting do not lie within the General Fund.

What other revenue sources are out there? Can anything legally be shifted within areas of the budget? At least part of that shortfall can be made up by trimming. After that, the new positions added to the City last year, including the one at the Fire Department, would sadly but reasonably, we think, be the first to go, if any positions must. A new fee? Only as a last resort.

— *The Baker County Press Editorial Board*

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## Public Safety Utility Fee

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### Budget Board Appointment

This Board has one vacancy that needs filled immediately. Budget meetings are scheduled to begin May 15, 2017 to set the City's budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Two applicants applied: Randy Daugherty, who has previously served on this board and Tracy Winans.

Winans has accounting and a government background. Appointment to this board is for a two-and-a-half-year term ending in January 2020.

McQuisten made a motion to appoint Randy Daugherty that was seconded by Joseph.

Thomas spoke up questioning if a vote was in order rather than a motion.

City Recorder Julie Smith advised if a motion was made it was appropriate to move forward that way.

A vote of 4/3 was cast in favor of appointing Daugherty.

### Smallwood Kennel License Appeal

In January, a kennel permit was requested by Carolyn Smallwood. Smallwood has had a permit since 2008. That permit expired Jan 1, 2017. At the time a renewal of the permit was requested there were approximately

26 dachshunds living in the home. The permit was denied by the Baker City Police Department due to complaints and conditions of the home. City ordinance allows for a hearing before the City Manager.

City Manager Warner met with Smallwood and Christina Wood on April 6th, 2017, and found that the denial of the kennel permit would stand. He advised Smallwood by mail that the matter would be forwarded to City Council and she was welcome to attend the Council meeting to appeal to Council.

Smallwood was at the meeting and addressed Council telling them she had taken steps to reduce the number of dogs and now had only 19 living in the home.

She stated that she was trying to place more but was very particular where they went and had already denied two homes. She also advised that some of the dogs were elderly and therefore difficult to rehome.

Several people including Code Enforcement Officer Mark Powell spoke of the deplorable conditions the dogs were in living in and that the dogs were in small crates, often more than one or two to a crate and were covered in their own feces and that the home overwhelmingly smelled of urine.

"It burned to breathe." described Powell.

Carmen Ott of Best Friends addressed Council as well regarding the conditions. She told Council that Smallwood had asked for their help in the past but then declined when offered.

She also stated that the Oregon Humane Society had been contacted and were ready and willing to help in the situation. Several of the Councilors were sympathetic to the emotional tie Smallwood had with the dogs but felt that in all honesty there were two separate issues at hand—one being the denial of the kennel application and the other being the situation of the dogs and what to do there.

Since Council agreed that they were charged simply with whether or not to uphold the denial of the kennel permit and not the animals themselves they voted on the matter upon a motion that they uphold the denial made by Joseph and a second by Nilsson. All voted in favor with the exception of Councilor Andersen.

Smallwood was advised she had 30 days to comply and get her puppy population to four, the amount allowed without a permit or risk being fined.

SEE PUBLIC SAFETY FEE PAGE 5

## — SPECIAL COLUMN —

*So I was thinking ...*

## For mom

By Jimmy Ingram  
Special to The Baker County Press



Submitted Photo

Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

There aren't any harder working people on our planet than mothers.

They put themselves and their own needs on the back burner for the good of their children and family and do so willingly and with little expected in return.

There aren't many problems in life that mom hasn't helped you through.

Childhood: Before you even knew it your mom went through a lot to bring you into this world.

And once you were here, her love and work increased tenfold.

She kept you warm and safe, kept your belly full and your diapers empty.

She put a band aid on your first scrape and gave you a hug when you couldn't sleep.

She combed your hair and read you books.

She held your hand crossing the street and pushed you for hours on the swing set.

She stayed up all night with you when you were sick.

She cried a little bit when she dropped you off at school the first time and greeted you with relief and enthusiasm when she picked you up.

She smiled from ear to ear when you rode your bike without training wheels for the first time and told you how proud she was.

She hung proudly from the fridge every picture, drawing, and craft you brought home.

Adolescence: Your mom was there to reassure you when the mean kid at school made fun of you.

She took you to and from practice and yelled your name proudly when you were up at bat.

She cleaned your room and did your laundry while you weren't even paying attention.

She bought you ice cream and let you and your friends make a mess of the house she just spent three hours cleaning.

She listened to you talk back and retreat to your room, knowing that someday you'd realize she was

right.

She took you to the DMV to take your drivers license test, and later watched you drive away to hang out with your friends with good faith you'd be home on time.

She helped you with math, corrected your bad grammar and taught you how to save money.

She was there in the stands cheering for every sporting event and recital you had.

She teared up with joy when you got your diploma and three months later cried again when she watched you drive away into the outside world—your own world.

Adulthood: She was there to console you when your heart got broken.

She reminded you to remember the good things about the world and to brush off the bad.

She told you how to cook your favorite meal and laughed when you told her how it turned out.

She taught you how to be patient and work for what you wanted.

She taught you to respect people and pay attention to the needs of others.

She reminded you to be charitable, appreciate what you have, and give to those who have less.

She felt indescribable joy as she watched you marry the person you love and once more as you started a family of your own.

She sees pieces of you in her grandchildren and feels great comfort in knowing that you'll be a wonderful parent.

She did it the right way and she knows you will too.

She gave you all she had to give, and then she gave more.

Happy Mother's Day to all the wonderful moms out there.

Your hard work, sacrifice, and dedication to your children, family, and community is what makes the world go round.

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