

Local

City Council

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C. Resolution #3797 Interfund Loan from Equipment and Vehicle Fund to the Central Stores Fund

This resolution asks for an approval for a deficit of \$35,000 in Central Stores Fund, transferring those dollars to the Equipment and Vehicle Fund while inventory is waiting to be resold such as chip seal rock.

Before any motions were made, Councilor

Andersen raised the question of selling the Golf Course entirely, then the City could collect property taxes on the property thus creating revenue and eliminating expenditures.

It was explained that it would be nearly impossible to sell as there was little interest in ownership of Golf Courses, especially rural Golf Courses.

Thomas said he felt that was an option that should be more carefully considered including looking at other City-owned property

that could be sold for profit and then taxed for revenue. All resolutions were passed unanimously by Council.

City Manager/Director Comments

City Manager Fred Warner advised Council that the Fire Department was experiencing a "rash of injury and sickness."

He commended the Department saying that they have been running double shifts and many that are able were really "picking up the slack."

He noted however that

it also meant that there would be an increase in overtime pay.

He also noted that last weekend had seen a very successful Baker City Cycling Classic and that there were events back to back for the next several weeks with 4th of July celebrations, the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally and The Miner's Jubilee all coming up.

Public Works Director Michelle Owen updated Council on the Auburn Street project saying that

the storm work was expected to be completed by the next day.

She said that the "big tree removal at the corner of Campbell and Resort has gone well" and that the area was still cordoned off and would remain so for the next day as the crew continued to clear debris.

Thomas asked Owen how the airport project was coming.

Owen stated that it was going well and expected the first phase of the project to be completed soon

and the second phase to begin right on schedule after completion of phase one.

Council Comments

Thomas informed everyone that a new exhibit would be opening at the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center as soon as July 1. He encouraged everyone to come see it saying it was most definitely not to be missed.

With nothing further Downing adjourned the meeting.

County: Special session held to address additional budget requests, budget adopted

BY TODD ARRIOLA

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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held a special session on Wednesday, June 28, 2017, 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, which included an additional budget request from Baker County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau Board President Jeff Nelson, and adoption of the 2017-2018 County budget.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett and Bruce Nichols, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin. Attendance also included Baker County Administrative Services Director Christena Cook, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash, Baker County Facilities Maintenance Foreman Dan McQuisten, and Baker County Parks Director Karen Spencer.

Harvey called the session to order, and provided the Invocation, and led in recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was adopted, with a few additions, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols.

Citizen Participation included Nelson, who asked the Board to consider renewal of the contract for the Bureau, normally a two-year term, to be reviewed annually.

Nelson said, "We are promoting Baker in the best possible way; our Visit Baker website has over a million hits a year... and we are becoming more and more involved with events. The biggest event, probably in history, is coming up in August (the Solar Eclipse, August 21)..."

Nelson said that the Bureau will possibly hand out over 100,000 pieces of information, if the County sees even half of the projected number of visitors during the event, which

will be a "...huge influx." He said that the Bureau will possibly mail out over 1,000 "Welcome" packets (sending these is a yearly practice), there is significant cost associated with this as well as with other practices, and he requested an additional \$5,000 for this fiscal year, if possible.

Harvey noted that the Transient Lodging Tax Committee (TLTC) provided the Bureau with \$40,000 of \$90,000 requested, and Bennett said that he wished to see more discussion regarding the \$5,000 request, including speaking with the TLTC, and holding a work session. Nelson provided the Board with copies of the Bureau's budget history and projections.

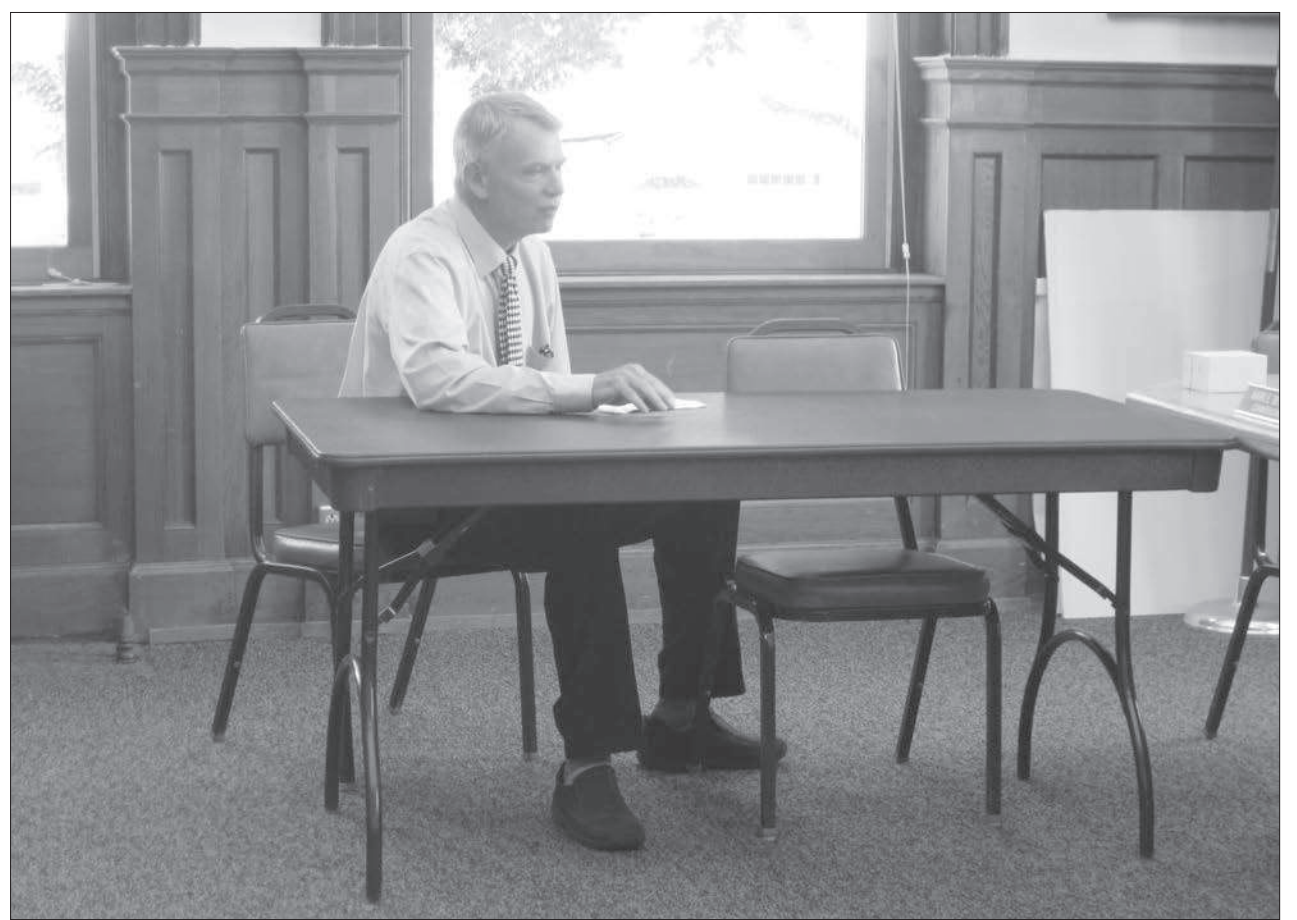
Cook discussed the County 2017-2018 budget with the Board, and she said that there weren't any changes to note except to the TRT (Transient Room Tax) Marketing budget (she provided copies to the Board).

She said, "The total dollar amount (\$522,120) didn't change..." but that distribution of funding in a few areas changed somewhat.

Resolution No. 2017-1012, Declaring the County Ad Valorem Property Tax, was adopted, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. The rate, according to the resolution, is 3.7286% per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Resolution No. 2017-1013, Adopting the 2017-2018 Budget and Making Appropriations Thereof, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. According to the resolution, \$28,526,253 is the total County budget.

Resolutions No. 2017-1014 through 2017-1023, in relation to the budget, were each approved separately, and Cook explained that prior to approval, these resolutions were nec-



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Jeff Nelson speaks to County Commissioners regarding an annual renewal of the Visitors Bureau contract.

essary primarily because of different funding needs and transfers of funds.

Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) No. 153115, between the Oregon State Health Authority (OHA) and the County, for the financing of Community Mental Health, Substance Use Disorders, and Problem Gambling Services, was approved, with a motion from Nichols, and a second from Harvey.

According to the agreement, OHA will provide funding to the County for these programs, and the expiration of the agreement is June 30, 2019.

Bennett discussed with the Board one of the additions to the agenda, a letter, dated June 28, 2017, and addressed from the Board to numerous representatives and senators, in support of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, House Bill 3249.

According to the letter, "This bill would help Oregon farmers and ranchers plan for succession and maintain agricultural land for future generations. It includes funding for working lands easements, covenants, and conservation management plans, as well as succession trainings and a tax study.

"There is an urgent need for the programs that this bill provides.

"With the average age of farmers and ranchers in Oregon nearing 60, 64% of Oregon's farmland (10.45 million acres) is estimated to change hands in the next 20 years, and the majority of Oregon farmers and ranchers do not have succession plans.

"An estate without a plan is almost certain to have higher estate tax liability, family strife, and attorney fees.

"To pay these bills, farmers and ranchers often sell

all or part of their property. This trend is growing.

"It results in the fragmentation of our landscape, which makes it more difficult to run a farm or ranch operation, as well as to manage on-site projects that benefit both agricultural productivity and natural resource conservation..."

The letter was approved to be signed and sent, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols.

Harvey discussed with the Board another letter, dated June 28, 2017, and addressed from the Board to Senator Ron Wyden and Congressman Greg Walden, in support of continued funding for the purpose of diabetes research, the Special Diabetes Program.

According to the letter, "The Baker County Commission serves more than 16,000 residents of Baker County, Oregon and one

of our main focuses is on providing health care resources for those living with disease.

"This is why we are fully supportive of continued funding into diabetes research to help address this terrible illness..."

"The Special Diabetes Program has been integral in funding essential research into cures and treatments for diabetes for almost twenty years and its importance cannot be understated.

"Health care costs associated with diabetes continue to plague our state, with an estimated \$3 billion dollars spent in Oregon each year to treat those living with diabetes and related complications..."

The letter was approved to be signed and sent, with a motion from Nichols, and a second from Bennett.

Fire Marshal urges fireworks safety over 4th

The Office of State Fire Marshal, Oregon fire service, Keep Oregon Green, the Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordination Group, natural resource agencies, Oregon fireworks wholesalers, and safety experts encourage Oregonians to "Keep it Legal and Keep it Safe" when using fireworks. The 2017 Oregon fireworks sales season opens Friday, June 23 and runs through

Thursday, July 6.

"I want to remind all Oregonians that consumer legal fireworks can only be purchased from Oregon permitted fireworks retailers and stands," says State Fire Marshal Jim Walker. "And, regulations limit where those fireworks may be used.

July 4th holiday forest visitors are advised to leave all fireworks at home. The use of fireworks

is prohibited on all national forestland, and most other public lands.

Oregon law prohibits possession, use, or sale of any firework that flies into the air, explodes, or travels more than 12 feet horizontally on the ground, without a permit issued by the OSFM. Fireworks commonly called bottle rockets, Roman Candles, and firecrackers are illegal in Oregon.

There were 192 reported fireworks-related fires in Oregon during 2016, resulting in more than \$519,000 in property damage.

Over the past five years, from 2012 through 2016, there were 944 reported fireworks-related fires in Oregon resulting in one death and more than \$2.1 million in property damage.

Officials may seize illegal

fireworks and fine offenders up to \$500 per violation. Those who misuse fireworks or allow fireworks to cause damage are liable and may be required to pay fire suppression costs or other damage. Parents are also liable for fireworks damage caused by their children.

The OSFM encourages: Be Prepared before lighting fireworks: keep water available by using a garden

hose or bucket.

Be Safe when lighting fireworks: keep children and pets away.

Be Responsible after lighting fireworks: never relight a dud. Wait 15 to 20 minutes then soak it in a bucket of water before disposal.

Be Aware: use only legal fireworks and use them only in legal places.