

# Local

## Council hears about grant



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

L-R: Julie Smith, Fred Warner, Jr., Loren Joseph, Rosemary Abell, Mike Downing, Arvid Andersen, Dan McQuisten and Jim Thomas.

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The first regular City Council meeting was called to order Tuesday night by Mayor Downing. Councilor McQuisten led the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation.

All Councilors answered present when Julie Smith, City Recorder called role with the exception of Councilor Nilsson.

Mayor Downing moved forward with the agenda calling for approval of the consent agenda that consisted of minutes from the August 8, 2017 regular Council meeting, minutes from the August 22, 2017 regular Council meeting minutes and a social gaming application from the Baker Elk's Lodge.

Councilor Joseph moved to approve with a second heard by Councilor McQuisten.

Council voted unanimously in favor. Mayor Downing called next for Citizen Participation but with none, continued on.

### Cured In Place Pipe Bid Award

Public Works Director Michelle Owen addressed Council regarding the matter.

She advised Council that the cured in place pipe replacement is an ongoing City project and the cost for this year's 3,321 linear foot project was budgeted for.

She explained that generally the work does not typically take place until winter but has found when bids for the work are secured earlier they often cost less.

She received three bids and recommended Council approve the bid award to Planned and Engineered Construction for \$150,850. Owen did state that the City had worked with the company previously and have been happy with their work.

With no other discussion, Councilor Joseph moved to approve the bid with Councilor Abell seconding.

A unanimous vote was cast.

### Ordinance #3358 Vacation of Allen Street

This matter was addressed by planning director Holly Kerns. Kerns explained that the property occupied a stretch near I-84 and Windmill Lane. Kerns told Council that

property owners in the immediate area had been notified and that notices had been advertised that allowed for public comment.

It was noted that a similar action had been attempted in the 1980s but was never completed due to a procedural technicality.

She noted that again in the 1990s the County recognized that a procedural difficulty had occurred and did file an order that it hadn't been vacated.

According to Kerns the process just never moved forward as it should have and with City annexation in 2004 this matter now needed to be addressed at the City level not the County level.

Kerns also clarified that by vacating the street no property would become land locked.

Mayor Downing opened a public hearing but with no one present for public comment the hearing was closed.

Council Joseph moved to hear a first reading of the ordinance, that was seconded by Councilor Thomas. Kerns read in full the ordinance. Councilor Joseph moved to approve the first reading that was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

Council voted unanimously to approve that reading. Councilor Joseph moved to hear a second reading of the ordinance by title only that was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

All Council voted in favor. Kerns read the ordinance a second time by title only.

Councilor Joseph moved to approve the second reading with a second heard by Councilor Abell. Council unanimously voted to approve the second reading.

SAFER Grant Discussion City Manager Fred Warner opened the conversation by telling Council "On September 1, the City received word that we had been granted the SAFER grant from the federal government."

He explained that what the grant would do is allow for the hiring of three additional firefighter positions that would be funded in part by the federal government.

Warner said, "The city would need to pick up 25% the first year, 25% the

second year and 65% the third year."

Warner provided Council with a staff report that outlined costs.

He advised Council that there was no anticipation any hiring would be done before Jan. 1, 2018 if the grant was accepted.

Warner stated that the City had until November 1, 2017 to officially accept the grant. He anticipated first year cost to the City to be \$28,791.

He advised that Council would need to settle on an acceptable funding plan before accepting the grant and he was just opening the matter up so that thoughts and ideas could begin to come to light and be explored.

He did note that he felt the savings cost in overtime to the Department by adding additional staff would be significant and those savings in part could be used to help fund the grant.

Warner stated that the Department is currently running a "bare bones operation and if call volume continues to increase without those additional positions we would be forced to consider shrinking the size of the ASA." Currently the City covers roughly 1600 square miles that includes service areas outside of City limits in the County.

Warner noted that by finding a way to make this grant work was the most cost-effective way for the citizens of Baker County to maintain ambulance services throughout the rural regions.

It was quickly realized that the County, being a large user of the Baker City Fire Department for Ambulance services was a resource that needed to be considered as a way to increase revenue necessary to fund the SAFER grant.

Council agreed that a meeting with County leaders should be set up to discuss ambulance service. It was also stated that there had been talk of establishing a completely separate EMS district.

That possibility was also something Council agreed that needed to be researched.

It was clear that decisions were needing to be made in an extremely timely manner.

Warner told Council he

would work on setting up a meeting date with the County as soon as possible.

### Backhoe/Loader Purchase

Owens again addressed Council. She stated that in August a request for proposals for a new backhoe/Loader for the Public works department had gone out.

She advised that three bids were received. All three of the bidders made available for consideration their proposed equipment by demonstration.

Public works employees were able to observe all three of the proposed equipment in action. Owens stated that while all of the equipment met the minimum requirements, the CAT 430F2 ranked the highest in overall performance and that access to service was also taken into consideration.

A total of \$135,000 was budgeted for this equipment purchase and this backhoe was priced at 119,291.16 and presented by Western States.

Therefore, she was recommending the purchase of the CAT 430F2. Councilor Joseph moved to approve the purchase with a second by Councilor Abell.

Council voted unanimously in favor.

Owen did advise Council that the equipment that this new loader would be replacing would be used through this winter season before being sold and once sold the money for that sale would go directly back into the same account that this new equipment was coming out of.

### City Manager/Director Comments

City Manager Warner stated that he and Councilor Andersen had earlier that day met with the Forest Service to talk about the watershed.

He also reiterated the SAFER grant and the need to not make haste in explore funding options. He mentioned that he felt Commissioner Nichols to be his best liaison at the County.

Council Comments Councilor Andersen also mentioned the Forest Service meeting and that while there was a long way to go on the issue, he felt "encouraged."

Downing then adjourned the meeting.

## North Powder native on ship



Submitted Photo.

Lane Loenning.

A North Powder, Oregon native and 2015 North Powder Charter School graduate is serving in the U.S. Navy aboard the guided missile destroyer, USS Curtis Wilbur.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Lane Loenning is an electronics technician aboard the forward-deployed Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer operating out of Yokosuka, Japan. Curtis Wilbur is one of eight destroyers forward-deployed in Yokosuka.

A Navy electronics technician manages preventive and corrective maintenance on electronic equipment. They maintain, repair, calibrate, tune, and adjust electronic equipment while utilizing test equipment and technical drawings for Command, Control, Computer, Communication, and Intelligence (C4I) systems, cryptographic systems, radar systems, and navigation systems.

"The value of hard work was instilled in everyone back home including my family, friends, community, and teachers," said Loenning. "This has influenced me greatly and helped me since joining the Navy."

With more than 50 percent of the world's shipping tonnage and a third of the world's crude oil passing through the region, the U.S. has historic and enduring interests in this part of the world.

"Our alliance is rooted in shared interests and shared values," said Adm. Harry Harris, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command. "It's not hyperbole to say that the entire world has benefited from the U.S.-Japan alliance. While our alliance helped stabilize the region after the Second World War, it also enabled the Japanese people to bring about an era of unprecedented economic growth. And for the last six decades, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen have worked side by side with the Japan Self Defense Force to protect and advance peace and freedom."

Approximately 300 men and women serve aboard the ship. Their jobs are highly specialized and keep each part of the ship running smoothly, according to Navy officials. They do everything from maintaining gas turbine engines and operating the highly sophisticated Aegis weapons system to driving the ship and operating small boats.

Forward-deployed sailors are crucial to the success of the global Navy mission and earn high praise from their leaders.

"I had an uncle in the Navy who would tell me sea stories and just hearing what he had to say inspired me to join the Navy," said Loenning.

Sailors serving abroad in Japan are highly motivated and quickly adapt to changing conditions, explained Navy officials.

"I joined the Navy because I wanted to serve for my country and protect the freedoms that we hold," added Loenning.

With the ability to conduct anti-air warfare, anti-submarine warfare and anti-surface warfare, destroyers are capable of sustained maritime operations supporting forward naval presence, maritime security, sea control, deterrence of aggressive actions on U.S. partners around the globe, as well as humanitarian assistance. Fast, maneuverable, and technically advanced, destroyers provide credible combat power, at and from the sea.

## Fall orchestra

The Baker Community Orchestra will begin weekly fall rehearsals on Thursday, September 14, in the Baker High School Band Room and continuing at 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Thursdays through the fall. Music pass out and registration begins at 6:30 p.m. All interested musicians are welcome come join in. There is no charge to participate, though free will donations to help pay for music are welcome. No auditions are required. We welcome all orchestra or band instruments.

The Orchestra always has a need for strings, percussionists, saxophones, and any bass instruments. There are a limited number of "loaner" instruments available. The purpose of the Orchestra is to provide the opportunity for community members to participate in making music, in particular, adult "comeback" players. Many of our members enjoyed playing in high school or college, then quit playing for some time, often due to no opportunity to play.

If you are interested and would like more information or to chat about joining, please call Brian Watt at 541-523-4662.