

# Local

## Citizen discusses length of County’s planning process

• SHERIFF’S OFFICE COMPLAINT PROCESS ADDRESSED

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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held its first regular session of 2018 on Wednesday, January 3, 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, which included the approval of several documents, and comments from Stacy Nagy, Art Sappington, and Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett and Bruce Nichols, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin. Attendance also included Baker County Justice Court Trial Administrator Mike Finney, John Creighton, Dave Hunsaker, and Tim Kerns.

Harvey opened the session, provided the Invocation, and led in recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was adopted, with no noted additions or changes, with a motion from Nichols, and a second from Bennett.

Citizen Participation included frustrated Halfway-based Nagy, who said, in reference to delays in applications he’d submitted to the County Planning Department, “I don’t know what’s going on. There’s a timeframe, that it’s supposed to be done...” He said they were submitted in July 2016, and mentioned some other communications with the Department since then, including requests for more information.

Harvey, a former County Planning Commissioner, said he’d heard the applications were being reviewed, and Bennett, a former County Planning Director, said he’d check with the Department to determine what the status is (Current Planning Director Holly



Mike Finney addresses the commissioners.

Kerns said that the applications involve complicated issues, but the process is moving forward).

Sappington, Coordinating Officer for the Jefferson Mining District, said he was unable to attend the session in December due to medical issues, and that his focus associated with mining now will be with more of an emphasis on passing on knowledge and the history of mining in Baker County to younger generations. Efforts include establishing mining training and local economic opportunities.

Bennett mentioned a concern brought to the Board’s attention by Adam Nilsson, during a previous session, who said that the Sheriff’s Office lacked an adequate complaint process, and since Ash was present during the current session, Bennett asked him to comment on that topic.

Ash said there actually is a policy, and Nilsson was afforded an opportunity to go through the process with a written complaint, which is required, but that at some point, Nilsson was uncooperative in resolving the issue.

The minutes from the

Wednesday, December 20, 2017 regular session were approved, with no noted corrections, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols.

A Professional Services Agreement, between the County and attorney Charles H. Gillis, for the services of indigent defense, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. The term of the contract is from January 1, 2018, through June 30, 2018, with a renewal option if funding is available, and the County agrees to pay Gillis a total of \$10,000 for up to 30 cases, with any additional cases billed at a rate of \$75 per hour. Prior to the agreement’s approval, Finney discussed the details with the Board, including expressing praise for Gillis’s previous work with the County.

Order No. 2018-101, Appointing A Budget Officer For Baker County, was approved, with a motion from Nichols, a second from Bennett, and an abstention from Harvey. Harvey was appointed, his term set as the 2018-2019 fiscal year (July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019).

Order No. 2018-102, Appointing A Member To The Baker County Museum Commission, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Camille Warner was appointed, her term set to expire on January 1, 2021.

Order No. 2018-103, Re-Appointing Members To The Baker County Museum Commission, was approved, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Nichols. Steve Bogart, Hal Huntington, and Mindy Sherrieb were re-appointed, their terms set to expire on January 1, 2021.

Order No. 2018-104, Re-Appointing Members To The Baker Valley Vector Control Board, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Gordon Colton and Fred Warner, Jr. were re-appointed, their terms set to expire on December 31, 2020.

Order No. 2018-105, Re-Appointing A Member To The Baker County Compensation Board, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Steve Schauer was re-appointed.

## Senate

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27 County Commissioners serving within Oregon Senate District 30 ( Baker, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Malheur, Wheeler, and parts of Clackamas, Deschutes, Lake, Marion, and Wasco counties).

Suzan Ellis Jones of Baker County was unable to attend the January 4th meeting, and had made arrangements to attend via phone, however, that connection suffered a technical glitch, meaning she was unable to participate. Jones and Dr. Eric Wattenberg each received the vote of one commissioner within the District, with Bentz receiving the rest.

Bentz was sworn in, in Salem, last week. With Bentz moving into the Oregon Senate, his vacated seat as a Representative is now up for grabs.

The nomination process for that vacancy will be the same as that of the senate seat, except this time the nominating convention will be held in Ontario, not John Day.

A notification letter from the Secretary of State’s Office states, “ORS 171.051(2) requires each nominee to be a citizen qualified to hold the office, an elector of State Representative District 60 and a member of the Republican Party for 180 days prior to the date of the vacancy. In addition, Article IV, section 3 of the Oregon Constitution requires that the appointee shall have been an inhabitant of the district for at least one year prior to the date of the appointment. It is the responsibility of the Republican Party to ensure that all nominees meet these qualifications before the submission of the “Willingness to Serve” statements to the Secretary of State.

“You are required to notify the Secretary of State of the persons nominated not later than January 29, 2018. The notification to the Secretary of State shall be accompanied by a signed written statement of each nominee’s willingness to serve in the vacated office. I have included the required form (SEL 145).

“Once the three to five nominees are chosen, the Baker and Lake County Board of Commissioners and the Grant, Harney and Malheur County Courts must meet to select one person. The vacancy must be filled by appointment not later than February 7, 2018.

“Pursuant to ORS 171.060(2), the Secretary of State shall set a time and place for the meeting, and name a chair. When naming a chair for this purpose the Secretary will 1) select a Commissioner or Judge of the same political party as the party of the nominees. If there are no commissioners who are registered as members of that party, the Secretary will 2) select a Commissioner or Judge that is registered to vote as not affiliated with a party. If there are no commissioners that meet criteria 1 or 2, the Secretary will select 3) the Chair of the Board of Commissioners or County Court of the county that has the most registered voters in the district of the vacancy. In accordance with ORS 171.062 when a vacancy occurs in a legislative district encompassing two or more counties, each county is entitled to one vote for each 1,000 of its electors or major fraction of 1,000 (more than 500 registered electors, but less than 1,000) residing within the district at the time the vacancy occurred. Based on the number of registered electors on January 8, 2018, each county commissioner is allotted the following number of votes:”

County	Number of Registered Electors	Votes per County	Number of Commissioners/Judges	Votes per Commissioner/Judge
Baker	11,615	12	3	4
Grant	5,130	5	3	1.66
Harney	4,985	5	3	1.66
Lake	436	1	3	0.33
Malheur	15,073	15	3	5

## Durkee’s community program rings in Christmas

BY CHUCK BUCHANAN  
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The annual Durkee Christmas program, which took place on the evening of December 23rd, has been an institution in the community since the days when the Durkee Community Hall was Durkee Grade School.

The two room school-house originally had two teachers, one for grades one through four and one for grades five through seven.

As enrollment declined, this changed to one room with one teacher. Cheryl Buchanan, an alumnus of the Durkee school, says that due to low enrollment the school closed in the fall of 1973.

Before that time the teachers would often stage elaborate Christmas pageants.

In 1974, Diane Bloomer, a local Durkee resident, took on the job of putting on the Christmas program

and has been the organizer of the program ever since.

Several generations of Durkee kids, and some from Baker Valley whose families have ties to Durkee, have grown up singing Christmas songs on the stage in the building’s gymnasium.

Each year’s program begins with a potluck supper and this year was no exception.

Approximately eighty hungry attendees, children and adults, enjoyed ham, various casseroles, salads and desserts along with coffee and lemonade.

When the meal was finished the crowd adjourned to the gym for the fun. Jabron Jones, youth pastor of the Harvest Church in Baker City, took the stage after having been introduced by emcee Dash Bloomer.

Jones spoke about the importance of being thankful for the gifts the Lord gives us every day.

He was followed by

many renditions of “Jingle Bells,” “Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer” and “Santa Claus is Coming to Town,” all of which were accompanied by Diane Bloomer on the piano and all of which received enthusiastic applause.

When the singing was finished there was a short curtain break during which a living Nativity scene, a long-standing tradition during the program, was prepared.

When the curtain opened, Mary, Joseph and many angels and shepherds could be seen surrounding a manger. Then it was time for Santa to arrive.

While everyone on the stage sang “Santa Claus is Coming to Town,” the old man with the red suit and white beard made his entrance from the back of the room, passing out candy to the audience as he made his way to the stage.

When he reached the stage and took his seat the kids lined up to let him



A living nativity scene composed of children from the community was part of the evening.

know what they wanted for Christmas. Each of the children in turn received a goodie bag containing

candy, a popcorn ball and peanuts, another fun Durkee tradition. After Santa’s visit it was

time to gather up potluck dishes, put on coats and get the kids home to bed.