

CityNews...

City Council January 7, 2008

City Receives US Flag from Senator Gordon Smith...

An American Flag that was flown over the Capitol building in Washington DC was received by the City of Vernonia from the office of US Senator Gordon Smith.

Remote Control Airplane Flights Allowable at Municipal Airport...

City Council repealed Ordinance 820 paving the way for the use of remote control airplanes at the Airport. The Airport Committee had previously requested this change to create more opportunities for use at the city run facility. Councilor Steve Whiteman commented that he was in favor of "...anything that stimulates use of the airport." Mayor Sally Harrison challenged the Airport Committee "...to get the Airport making money."

Council Adopts Job Description for City Administrator Position...

Council was presented with a complete job description for the position of City Administrator. According to Dick Kline who prepared the description, and who was serving as City Administrator at the time the description was written, the city has been operating without a comprehensive description for this position. The new description spells out the functions, knowledge/abilities/skills, and qualifications of the position. After a discussion that noted the "vagueness" of the qualifications that are required, it was agreed by the council that the broad scope of the position calls for allowing the city to consider a range of potential applicants when attempting to fill the position. Council adopted the new job description.

Verizon Service to Become Permanent...

Interim City Administrator Aldie Howard announced that he has reached an agreement with Verizon to provide cell phone service in the area with the siting of a permanent tower on city property.

Council Moves Forward with Flood Recovery...

Interim City Administrator Howard brought a number of proposals before council in regards to the city response to the flooding of December. Howard received permission by consensus to form a Recovery Committee made up of local citizens and staff to guide the securing of resources for the recovery effort. He also received permission to contract with Dale Merrill, a

public works specialist, as City Engineer and to begin the process of a sewer and water rate study for the city. He also announced that he has met with Architects Without Borders and had discussions with Portland State University about securing assistance with flood recovery.

VCLC programs postponed...

Council received a written report from Community Learning Center Director Jessica Jones announcing the postponement of programs and classes in order to accommodate more pressing needs of the community. The Learning Center building is being used as the central location for flood relief for Columbia County and was also serving as a temporary classroom for Vernonia grade school students. In an attempt to recover lost revenue, two offices in the building are being rented to the Columbia County Rider transportation system, to Columbia Community Mental Health, and to DHS Vocational Rehabilitation. Jones reported that once the community no longer needs the space, regular programs will resume.

City Council January 22, 2008

Flood First Responders Honored...

The City of Vernonia recognized local first responders who were instrumental in the initial flood response from the community. Vernonia Police Sergeant Mike Kay, Mayor Sally Harrison and County Commissioner Tony Hyde individually honored those



Pictured left to right: Tony Hyde, Sally Harrison, Mike Kay, and Shelley Cota.

Fire and Rescue Personnel, Emergency Medical Technicians, Citizen Emergency Response Team members and private citizens who gave selflessly of their time dur-

ing the first days of the flood. Life Saving Medals were given to Norm Brown, Ben Davis, Dean Smith, and Wayne Vaughn for their heroic efforts during the initial disaster. Certificates of Appreciation were given to the other responders who served. Standing ovations were given to Police Chief Mathew Workman, Sergeant Kay, and Fire Chief Paul Epler for their outstanding service. "It warms my heart to be able to show our citizens' appreciation for all of you," said Mayor Harrison.

Economic Development Committee Proposed...

Vernonia citizen Bud Dow has proposed the formation of a formal Economic Development Committee that would act to shape the local economy by attracting new business, retaining established businesses, and improving the quality of life in Vernonia. The committee would report directly to the Mayor and would actively seek affiliation with state and regional organizations. City Staff will work to formalize this proposal.

Flood Recovery Continues...

Interim City Administrator Aldie Howard discussed items he is working on for the city in its recovery efforts. He briefly discussed the possible citing of FEMA temporary housing units on Knott Street and the fact that there is some opposition to this proposal from area residents. He noted the scheduling of a Recognition Ceremony in Salem on January 31 for the Department of Corrections Inmate Crews that assisted the community in flood clean up and announced that he is attempting to secure more inmate crews to help with watershed cleanup. He also announced that Architects Without Borders will be creating some sample designs of raised homes based on actual home sites in Vernonia. He also announced that the city is purchasing a new multi-line phone system that will be used at the Community Learning Center and is being tested for possible use in other city facilities.

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