

CityNews...

City Council July 7, 2008

Council Awards Legal Services Agreement to Firm...

City Council approved an agreement the law firm of Jordon Schrader Ramis PC to provide legal services to the City of Vernonia. The agreement calls for the city to pay \$1,855 monthly, in return for retainer services which include attendance at three of every four monthly council meetings and all general day-to-day legal advice and assistance.

Council Discusses Golf Carts on City Streets...

Based on concerns raised at a previous Council meeting by Councilman Randy Parrow, Vernonia Police Chief Mathew Workman reported on his investigation into the use of golf carts on city streets. According to Chief Workman, Oregon State statutes forbid the use unless the operator has been issued a Disability Permit by the Oregon Department of Transportation. There were also concerns raised about visibility, especially in low light conditions. The city may consider a local ordinance that would allow the use of golf carts on city streets. Golf carts would still not be allowed on Bridge Street because it is a State Highway. Chief Workman said he would speak with the three residents who are currently using carts as a means of transportation and that he intended to enforce state statutes.

Council Passes Resolution Declaring Urgent Need...

City Council passed a resolution declaring an urgent need to rehabilitate owner-occupied single-family

flood damaged homes in Vernonia. This resolution will be included in grant applications.

City Council July 21, 2008

Council Appoints Cindy Ball to Fill Vacancy...

Immediately prior to the City Council Meeting, Cindy Ball was selected to fill the City Council vacancy left by the resignation of councilwoman Shirlee Daughtry. Ball is a former Mayor and Councilwoman for Vernonia. Other applicants for the position included Kevin Hudson, Karen Mains, Andy Nebergall, and Mike Seager.

Senior Center to Host Discussion on Golf Cart Use...

During topics from the floor, Gene Wittingham spoke and asked for the City to work together to find solutions to the ban of golf carts as transportation on city streets. He announced that the Senior Center will hold a lunch discussion and brainstorming session on August 19 and invited the public to attend. Current State Ordinance prohibits use of golf carts on city streets except when an operator has a Disability Permit.

Council Approves Street Closures During Jamboree...

City Council approved various street closures to allow for numerous activities to take place during Jamboree weekend, August 1-3, including Adams Avenue from Bridge Street to Maple Avenue, Park Drive, and Weed Avenue at City Hall until 4:00PM on Saturday, August 2. Council also approved a ban

on parking on Bridge Street on Saturday from 9:00 AM until the end of the parade and the placement of gates between the alley next to Black Bear Coffee Co. and 847 Bridge Street.

Council Authorizes Contract Creation with Chamber...

City Council authorized Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson to create a final contract with the Vernonia Chamber of Commerce to provide services to administer the city business license program.

Council Will Handle Administrator Search...

Based on a recommendation by Interim Administrator Johnson, City Council, under the direction of Johnson, will take responsibility for the recruiting process for a new City Administrator. Johnson has experience in this type of recruitment in previous positions with the City of Creswell, Oregon, and in Roseburg, Oregon. Johnson provided a list of steps to be taken and a suggested timetable of approximately sixteen weeks to complete the process.

Council Extends Recycling Contract...

City Council again extended the deadline for D.A.D.S Recycling until August 30, allowing them to continue accepting co-mingled items. D.A.D.S is in the process of negotiating a new site for their facility.

Council Asks for an Extension on Offer for Sale of Building...

City Council asked for an extension until August 5, 2008, to consider an offer for the purchase of the old City Hall building.

Police Investigate Death (continued)

The officers confirmed the report and requested medical response.

The man, identified as Kolton Owen Graham of Vernonia, 21, was pronounced dead at the scene. He was in possession of a handgun.

Graham was an acquaintance of the female driver. Graham reportedly had gone to the complainant's residence where he met the female with whom he later left. He then confronted the complainant regarding a personal matter while armed with a handgun. Graham left the area in the vehicle that was being driven by the female when stopped by police.

The Columbia County Major Crime Team consisting of detectives from Oregon State Police, Columbia County Sheriff's Office, St. Helens Police Department, and Scappoose Police Department responded to investigate.

On Sunday, July 20th, an autopsy was completed by the State Medical Examiner's Office and determined the cause of death was from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

Friends of the Kolton Graham family have started a fund at the Wauna Federal Credit Union to assist the family with funeral expenses. Checks can be made to: "Daryl Owen for Kolton Graham."

Town Hall Meeting - The Series

On Tuesday, August 19, 2008 at 7:00PM there will be a Town Hall meeting held at The Scout Cabin at Hawkins Park.

Discussion at this meeting will be Hazard Mitigation, Community Development Block Grants and FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. This meeting will address the overall impact of these programs on the City of Vernonia and Columbia County residents affected by the December 3, 2007 flood and related storm damage. It is expected that there will be a representative from Oregon Emergency Management and FEMA there as well.

There will also be brief updates from representatives of other community entities, including the Vernonia School District, Western Oregon Electric Cooperative, City of Vernonia Public Works and Park Committees.

Town Hall meetings are also scheduled for Monday, September 22 and Wednesday, October 22 at 7:00 p.m. Details regarding the subjects of these meetings will be available at City Hall, Columbia County Flood Relief Center (The Vernonia Community Learning Center), as well as on their websites, www.vernonia-or.gov and www.vernoniaflood.com approximately one week before each scheduled meeting.

More Changes for Vernonia Leadership

The City of Vernonia has undergone another series of leadership changes.

Cindy Ball was named to the City Council to replace Shirlee Daughtry who resigned last month. The current members of the council chose Ball from among five applicants, to complete Daughtry's term. Ball has previously served as the Mayor of Vernonia and on the City Council. Ball was sworn in before the July 21 council meeting.

City Planner Aldie Howard resigned from his position. Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson has hired Carol Conner to handle the ongoing application from Nehalem View Planned Development, currently being reviewed by the Vernonia Planning Commission. Johnson will be putting out a Request For Proposal to interested applicants for the vacant City Planner position.

Ignacio Palacios has been hired as Interim Financial Director, replacing former City Administrator and outgoing Finance Director M.R. "Dick" Kline. Palacios will give guidance to staff while working two days a week. He is currently the Finance Director of the City of Milwaukie, and is being loaned to Vernonia for one day a week by Milwaukie, and paid by Vernonia for the other day.

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