

CityNews...

City Council March 2, 2009

Life Saving Awards Presented...

The City of Vernonia and the Vernonia Police Department presented Life Saving Awards to five officers who were involved in a hostage/suicide threat negotiation on December 6, 2008. The situation involved officers from the Vernonia, St. Helens and the County SERT Team. The officers recognized were Mike Conner and Jeff Dalrymple from the Vernonia Department, Deputy Troy Caldwell from the Interagency SERT Team, Detective Jeremy Howell and officer Jose Castillia from the St. Helens Police Department.



Vernonia Police Officer Mike Conner Accepts the Life Saving Award from Mayor Sally Harrison.

Lloyd Appointed to Library Board...

Mayor Sally Harrison and the Council approved the appointment of Neil Lloyd to the Library Board

Parks Committee To Hold Public Processes...

City Council approved the Parks Committee's request to move forward with holding a public process to get citizen input on the kinds of uses they would like to see promoted at Vernonia Lake. The concept for a Use Plan was suggested by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff during a visit to the lake with park committee members. A formal date for the meeting process will be announced.

The Parks Committee also announced they will be holding a public meeting on April 7 to get input from citizens about ways they might assist the city Public Works Department with parks maintenance. The Meeting will be held at the Vernonia Community Learning Center.

Planning Commission Intends to Update City Transportation Plan...

Council approved the City Planning Commission request to apply for grant funding to update the City Transportation Plan, which was last updated in 1999. The update is being planned at this time to include a Roads Inventory, a Roads Condition Inventory, to consider siting of a new school campus, and to consider increased bicycle and pedestrian use within the city. The grant will be for between \$60,000 and \$80,000 and will require an 11% match from the city.

Council Approves Liquor License Renewals...

Council approved requests for Oregon Liquor License Renewals for the following businesses: Black Bear Coffee Co. LLC; Bridge Street Mini Mart; Cedar Side Inn Inc.; Tice Inc.; The Lyons Den; Blue House Cafe LLC; and Sentry Market.

Police Department Announces Formation of Youth Services Team...

Interim Police Chief Mike Kay announced the formation of a Youth Services Team which will meet monthly and include members

of the Columbia County Juvenile Department, County DHS Self-Sufficiency and Child Welfare Departments, County Mental Health, Providence Medical Clinic, the Vernonia School District, and the Vernonia Police Department. According to the Participant Manual distributed at the council meeting, the Youth Services Team is a network formed to address crisis intervention support to families and youth, and participation is voluntary based on referrals. Chief Kay explained the team as "...an early detection prevention of social, individual, or family delinquency problems on a local level." Kay went on to explain that the intention is to identify potential problems before they reach a criminal justice level. "This is a new way of thinking where we're going to try and intervene ahead of time... to help families in crisis."

Police Make Ecstasy Seizure...

Interim Police Chief Mike Kay announced the confiscation of a large amount of Ecstasy from two Vernonia school students. Based on tips from informants and concerned citizens, Vernonia Police officers made a traffic stop and recovered enough Ecstasy to make sixty capsules. The two juveniles, aged sixteen and fifteen, have been charged with Unlawful Possession, Unlawful Manufacture and Unlawful Delivery of MDMA (Ecstasy). Also seized during the arrest was the vehicle the suspects were driving, which was referred to the District Attorneys Office for forfeiture, and two cellular phones.

Council Approves City Administrator Search Timeline...

Council approved a recommended timeline and the recommended process for selection of a new City Administrator, making current Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson responsible for the recruitment process. Council added to the suggested motion submitted by Johnson, that they would first try to negotiate retaining Johnson as a consultant before moving forward with the search. Johnson was not in attendance at the meeting.

Council Approves Storm Drainage Planning...

Council approved entering into a contract with Dale Merrell and CIDA Architects/Landesign for no more than \$31,000 for a Storm Drainage Plan. Funding would come from Storm Water Systems Development Charge Funds. The plan information should be available by June, 2009.

City Council March 16, 2009

Council Hears Three Presentations...

The Vernonia City Council received three presentations to start the meeting. The first was by Ben Fousek, with KLS Surveying, who has been establishing a Geographic Information System (GIS) for the city. Fousek updated council on his progress and showed some examples of ways city staff is already using the system. Fousek and KLS have established a website where the public can view and use the work they are creating for the city: www.klssurveyng.com/vernonia. GIS can be used to create maps with many information layers and corresponding informational pages.

Next, Council received an introduction from Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson to the City Budget Process for the 2009-10 fiscal year. Johnson gave a review of the budget process for the council and budget committee, and introduced the proposed budget calendar. The first budget meeting is scheduled for April 27; the first budget hearing at which public comments will be taken is scheduled for April 29.

Next, Council heard a report from Jim Tierney, Deputy Director of Community Action Team, on the progress of flood recovery. Tierney gave a recap of the work of the Columbia County Flood Unmet Needs Committee, and reported that, as of February, 2009, they

have mobilized a total of almost \$4.3 million in resources; directed over \$2.4 million in assistance to families and the the city of Vernonia; have spent just over \$400,000 in operating costs; have remaining fund balances of almost \$1.2 million and will be applying for and expect to receive \$6.9 million in funding this year. Tierney also reported there are forty-six elevation projects in progress, thirty-two buyout projects in progress, five replacement home projects in progress, and five home repair projects in progress.

Council Approves Funds for Mayors Contest Prizes...

Mayor Sally Harrison requested and received approval from council for \$150 to be used as prizes for the annual "If I were Mayor" contest. The contest encourages local youth to create essays, posters, and other written and visual demonstrations that are judged locally by the city council, with winners sent to a statewide competition.

Chief Kay Graduates From FBI Command College...

Interim Police Chief Mike Kay participated in and completed the Annual Northwest Command College organized by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Council Approves Parks SDC Funds for Playground Equipment...

The Vernonia Parks Committee requested and received approval from council to spend up to \$15,000 of Parks SDC Funds to upgrade playground equipment at Hawkins Park.

Council Authorizes Agreement For Flood Modeling...

Council authorized Mayor Harrison to enter into a standard agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers for a flood modeling study that would develop scenarios based on changes in the flood plain. Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson explained that the Army Corps of Engineers does not currently have funding available to do the study, but that by signing the agreement now, the city could use a LIDAR study it is already planning as local matching funds for the flood modeling study. The Corps of Engineers estimates the cost of the study to be \$200,000-- \$100,000 comes from the Corps of Engineers, \$100,000 would come from local match-- in part through the cost of the LIDAR study. The LIDAR study will be paid for with state funds.

Council Amends Rates and Fees at Vernonia Airport...

Council passed a resolution adjusting fees at the Vernonia Airport to \$.10 per square foot for hanger ground lease fee; added an Access Fee of \$15 per month per plane with a minimum of \$150, and Tie-down fees of \$25 per month.

Council Adopts Financial Management Policies...

Council adopted financial management policies and procedures that were taken from suggestions made by federal monitoring related to the Prevention Coalition Grant.

Council Established Emergency Preparedness Committee...

Council approved the establishment of an Emergency Preparedness Committee which will be made up of seven members appointed by the Mayor. The Committee will include one member of the City Council who will act as chair of the committee, one member recommended by the board of the Vernonia Fire District, the General Manager of West Oregon Electric Coop and four at-large members, with at least two of those members having participated in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

Council Approves Hiring of Finance Manager...

Council approved the hiring of Susan Spicer-Pond as the permanent Finance/Human Resources Manager at a rate of \$26.04 per hour. Pond has been working for the city as a consultant since October of 2008.

City Council Column

By Randy Parrow

We live in exciting times! The Oregon Solutions Team, direct from Governor Kulongoski's office, is here to help with new schools, and the reshaping of Vernonia. If you haven't thought of our future that way, you might take it under consideration. Vernonia will never be the same. We are changing. It's unfortunate a devastating flood would be the reason for this rebirth, but now opportunity abounds. I'm not in any way saying the flood was good, but it has brought about an opportunity that we may not have been able to shoulder on our own. Vernonia will rise above the turmoil, turn it around, and make the best of it. We always do and we always will.

So what can you do? Get involved. Whether it is with our kids, a charitable organization, the city, the schools, a local church, or any other organization that helps to better Vernonia... get off your duff and do something! Maybe you think you don't have the time or skills it takes to be a volunteer. There are many things that can be done in 1 or 2 nights at a meeting once a month, or a couple hours once a week at home. The more people involved, the more ideas and people-power there is to accomplish great things-- it's up to you. Be a participant!

A comment about the Vernonia Blog.com. Yeah, I know you said it was a rumor, however, if you plant the seed on TV or in print, it must be true, cause nobody would ever report or print misinformation... right? Anyway, it

was November 11th, our first rains, there was very little water in the rivers, and the news crews were here trying to make a story out of nothing. When the news channel (I think 6), came in the store and asked to speak to me, I told them, "You don't want to hear what I have to say, all you are doing is inciting fear in our children (maybe you didn't know there were children afraid to go to school because they feared it was going to flood again), creating a story out of nothing, and sensationalizing a non-event." That is when I asked them to come outside and said, "Look the sky is falling!"

That was in November when there was no real threat of flooding. It just frustrates me when the news sources sensationalize any type of news. In December of this past year, when the threats were real, having been a participant in both the 96 & 07 events (both in my business and my home), I was right there appreciating what the news and weathermen were

saying and using that useful information to try and mitigate my possible losses.

I sincerely urge you to be part of the solution and get involved in a productive way!

Sincerely... and into the future... together.

NEW COTTAGES COMING SOON: AVAMERE AT ST. HELENS



Avamere at St. Helens also offers assisted living apartments and a memory care residence.

Call 503.366.8070 to schedule a tour of our community.

Life this good has its benefits!

- Up to 1,500 sf of living space
- Two bedrooms & two baths
- Full kitchen & attached garage
- Utilities (excluding telephone)
- Bi-weekly housekeeping service
- In-home & yard maintenance
- Wireless call system

AVAMERE
AT ST. HELENS

2400 Gable Road | St. Helens, OR 97051 | 503.366.8070 | www.avamere.com