

CityNews...

City Council April 2, 2009

Hudson resigns from Public Works Committee...

In a letter read by Mayor Sally Harrison, Public Works Committee Chair Helen Hudson announced her resignation from the committee.

Police Department Presents Mission Statement...

Interim Vernonia Police Chief Mike Kay presented the Council with a Mission Statement that is based on the stated department values of integrity, teamwork, respect, professionalism and excellence.

Police and Citizens Discuss Recent Actions...

Interim Police Chief Mike Kay reported on several recent arrests his department has made and referenced three recent media releases. Those press releases included arrests on March 20 on Bridge Street in Vernonia that involved underage drinking by minors, furnishing alcohol to minors, delivery of marijuana, assaulting a public safety officer, and resisting arrest, among other charges; an arrest on March 26 after a report of attempted theft of vehicle parts from a residence that led to a high-speed chase and eventual capture of the suspect; and a vehicle stop on March 27 that led to the arrest of two men who were charged with possession and delivery of heroin. Several citizens spoke during topics from the floor to commend the Vernonia Police Department for their work during these arrests, while one citizen expressed concerns about excessive use of force during the arrest on March 20.

Council Awards Contract for Update of Wastewater Plan...

Council has awarded a contract for an update of the city wastewater facilities plan to Brown and Caldwell, an Environmental Engineering and Consulting firm. Brown and Caldwell was chosen from six proposals. According to Interim City administrator Jim Johnson, Brown and Caldwell was chosen based on the qualifications of their proposal. They were also the lowest bidder, and also did a good job telling the city how to "fast track" the project to be able to take advantage of available Federal Stimulus Funds. Johnson stated that the intention is to begin construction of a new wastewater treatment facility by February 16, 2010. Brown and Caldwell's fee was stated to be \$175,787, which will be paid for with funds from a Community Development Block Grant that the city was awarded.

City Establishes Emergency Preparedness Committee...

With the second reading of Ordinance #854, council estab-

lished an Emergency Preparedness Committee. The Committee would be responsible for assisting the city in emergency training, education, coordination, and advisement in relation to community emergency preparedness.

Council Awards Contract for Demolition of Old City Hall Annex...

Northwest Excavating, a local Vernonia company submitted the low bid at \$4,350 and was awarded the contract for removal of the old City Hall Annex on Bridge Street.

City Council April 20, 2009

Council Holds Hearing on Street Vacation...

City Council heard testimony and held discussions on a request for a street vacation of a portion of East avenue between C and D Streets. In a staff report, City Planner Carrel Connell reported that the city had previously vacated the section from C Street to the alley, and recommended that approval for the applicants, Darwin Holm and Kris Burkland, be subject to three conditions: that the applicants prepare a fifteen-foot easement to provide access, that the applicants provide an engineer-approved legal description of the property, and that a certified copy of the ordinance vacating the street be filed by the applicants with Columbia County Clerk. No one spoke in opposition to the request. Council decided to delay voting on the vacation until those requirements were met.

Council Hears Update on GIS...

Ben Fousek from KLS Surveying reported on the progress of the Geographic Information System (GIS) that the city has contracted to have developed. Fousek reported on maps he has created so far. He also reported that costs to the city in the next fiscal year would be around \$1,100 per month to continue to maintain and develop the system, and that they are also requesting a \$10,000 budget for capital improvements for the system. Fousek also reported that Don Wallace, owner of KLS has acquired a dedicated GIS database server. Fousek said he hopes to make improvements to the city permit system. Fousek identified some problems that he thought the GIS system would address and improve including: lack of retention of information due to staff turnover, better collection and retention of data, better communication and organization of information for city entities.

Council Approves Street Closures for Jamboree...

Council approved a request from the Jamboree Committee for closures for food and non-food vendors: on Adams Avenue from Bridge Street to Maple Street; Park Avenue; Weed

Avenue at City Hall; Alley Way between the Lyons Den Pub and the Old 76 Gas Station; and a request for no parking on Bridge Street from Saturday August 8th from 8:00AM until the end of the Parade.

Police Department Receives Defibrillators...

Interim Police Chief Mike Kay showed council one of three AED Defibrillators that the city has received as a donation.

Council Approves Spending for Police Priority Needs...

Interim Police Chief Mike Kay provided council with an itemized list of needs, and requested money that had been originally allocated for an ICOP Camera System. The Department received two free refurbished camera systems from the Oregon State Police, and Kay had previously requested the unused funds for other department priorities. The priorities list was made up of the following items: Equip the new 2004 Ford F250 with emergency equipment-- \$5,083.50; install the refurbished ICOP camera systems in the 2004 and 2006 Crown Victoria vehicles-- \$489.00 each; repair the ICOP system in the 2007 Expedition that was damaged during the 2007 flood; and replace one ballistic vest for the new department officer-- \$695.00. The total request for funds was \$7,606.50. Council approved the request.

Vernonia Police to Host Public Information Officer Academy...

Interim Police Chief Mike Kay announced that the Vernonia Police Department will be host for an Effective Public Information Officer Academy to be held June 22-24. Kay stated that around 100 officers from around the Pacific Northwest will attend. Kay also stated that the Vernonia Department will be host to four more classes that he will report on in the future. Kay stated there is no charge for attending any training for officers from host agencies. Kay also informed council that two Vernonia Officers will be attending a Desert Snow Training in Pendleton, Oregon. The three-day training is designed to expose attendees to current concealment methods being utilized in passenger-type vehicles by terrorists and other major criminals, and is designed for all front-line officers who encounter passenger vehicles during their daily assignments.

Council Approves Signing of Letter of Intent...

Council approved the mayor to sign a letter of intent to make a one-year commitment to the Oregon Community and Economic Development Department (OECDD) Main Street Program. Oregon Main Street is a statewide commercial district revitalization program, and works to assist communities in achieving viable commercial districts.

City Council Column

By Brett Costley

Budget season is about to start in the city. If you've ever wondered where your tax dollars go, or would like to express your opinion on how the city should spend those tax dollars, here is your chance. The budget message will be given May 11. No public comments will be taken then, but public comments will be taken on May 14. Both meetings are at 7 PM at city hall.

On a different note, President Obama has recently called for the nation to do more community service. His call got me to thinking about volunteerism in Vernonia. I don't have any specifics, but I believe that the average citizen of Vernonia does much more volunteering than the average American. Volunteerism even seems to be a full time job for many of our locals. While we are doing pretty well as a whole, it doesn't hurt to think individually whether you are doing your share or if you have the opportunity to do more. Currently, the city has several committee openings on the planning commission, and public works. Of course, not everyone has interest in volunteering with the city. Churches, the PTA, the Scouts, the food bank, clean-up day, and service organizations are some of the many other choices. So is helping out an elderly or disabled neighbor. So, to paraphrase another president: Ask not what Vernonia can do for you; ask what you can do for Vernonia!

Election Information

The Public Certification Test of the counting equipment for the Special Election to be held on May 19, 2009 will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2009. The testing will begin at 2:00 p.m. in the County Elections Dept. The public is welcome to attend.

Drop sites for the election will be as follows:

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| • RAINIER CITY HALL:
106 B St. West | May 1 - May 18 - During Office Hours
May 19 - 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM |
| • CLATSKANIE LIBRARY:
11 Lillich St. | May 1 - May 18 - During Office Hours
May 19 - 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM |
| • SCAPPOOSE CITY HALL:
33568 E. Columbia Ave. | May 1 - May 18 - During Office Hours
May 19 - 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM |
| • VERNONIA LIBRARY:
701 Weed Ave. | May 1 - May 18 - During Office Hours
May 19 - 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM |
| • MIST-BIRKENFELD RFPD OFFICE
12525 Highway 202 | May 1 - May 18 - During Office Hours
May 19 - 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM |
| • COUNTY COURTHOUSE
ELECTIONS DEPT. | 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday
Drop Off Box located in lower parking lot
Election Day, May 19, 2009, Elections Dept.
Will be open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. |

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