

Vernonia City News...

At the August 3, 2009, City Council Meeting:

Brent Thompson Sworn In as Police Reserve Officer-- Interim Police Chief Mike Kay introduced Brent Thompson, the first Reserve Officer to be sworn into the city's reinstated program. Thompson is a 2007 graduate of Vernonia High School and is currently enrolled in the Criminal Justice program at Western Oregon University. Mayor Sally Harrison assisted with the proceedings.

City Makes Amendment to Sub-Grant Agreement-- The City of Vernonia made an amendment to the Sub-Grant Agreement with Community Action team, Inc. The original agreement was for program and grant management services related to Community Development Block Grant D08017, and the amendment made the agreement retroactive from the original signing date of April 27, 2009, to October 23, 2008.

Mayor Thanks Library Staff-- Mayor Sally Harrison expressed sincere thanks to Librarian Nancy Burch, the Library staff and local police for their work during the heat wave that hit Vernonia during July. Library staff established a cooling center at the Library, allowing local residents to escape the 100+ degree heat. About thirty residents made use of the facility on the first night.

Council Approves Workers Comp coverage for

Volunteers-- City Council passed a Resolution that annually updates Workers Compensation Insurance Coverage for city volunteers.

Council Discusses Alarm Permit Fees-- Interim Police Chief Mike Kay presented information for City Council to consider that would put in place a requirement for homes and businesses with burglar alarms to have a permit and would institute charges for false alarms. Council asked Chief Kay to return with additional information.

At the August 17, 2009, City Council Meeting:

New Police Chief Takes Oath of Office-- New Vernonia Police Chief Frank Grace was sworn into office by City Administrator Bob Young.

Mayor Accepts VCLC Committee Resignation-- Mayor Sally Harrison accepted the resignation of Kate Laird from the Vernonia Community Learning Center (VCLC) Committee. After the reading of the letter, Council recommended that staff convene a workshop with the VCLC Committee in the near future to discuss VCLC operations.

Mayor Makes Appointment to Public Works Committee-- Mayor Sally Harrison, with Council approval, appointed Sam Poetter to the Public Works Committee.

with Council About Audience Participation-- City Attorney Jeff Bennett made a presentation to Council and discussed protocols for Topics From the Floor and audience participation during council meetings. After a review of current procedures and options, Bennett reminded Council that personnel issues are the responsibility of the City Administrator, and recommended that Council not discuss those issues in open Council meetings.

Council Approves Funding for Columbia County Rider-- Council approved funding in the amount of \$3,500 to Columbia County Rider for Community Service Funding.

Police Report Jamboree Was a Success From Law Enforcement Standpoint-- Police Chief Frank Grace reported that Police spent a total of 260.5 hours on patrol during Jamboree, of which 108 hours were donated by outside agencies. Chief Grace reported that only three police reports were generated during the weekend, and only two adult arrests were made.

Mayor and Administrator Thank Lenaerts-- Mayor Harrison and City Administrator thanked Seth Lenaerts for his work for the city this past year. Lenaerts has been a participant in the RARE program, which provides recent college graduates the opportunity to work in small cities in Oregon to assist with projects. Lenaerts has worked with city staff on planning issues during his year in Vernonia.

City Attorney Consults

Vernonia Chooses New Police Chief

Frank Grace has been selected as Vernonia's new Police Chief, replacing Interim-Chief Mike Kay. The announcement was made by City Administrator, Bob Young. Chief Grace retired last October after over 30 years in law enforcement, most recently as the Police Chief of Gladstone, Oregon. He will be serving the community of Vernonia as a "Part-time Chief," working an average of twenty hours per week.

"In order to keep the current officers, the City felt it was better to find a retired Chief who wanted to keep involved in law enforcement," stated Administrator Young. "This Chief will be a mentor to our younger police force, as well as adding his many years of experience to our force."

Chief Grace has experience in security, corrections, parole and probation, and law enforcement. He served local police departments in California, as well as Cannon Beach and Gladstone. He has a B.A. in Criminal Justice, an A.A. in Law Enforcement, and has begun working on his Masters at San Jose State University.

He was the Program Administrator for Multnomah County Parole and Probation. He also worked in security for Riedel International, Inc. He is an ATV, motorcycle and scooter rider "coach," and was the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Manager for the City of Gladstone.

"His broad range of experience will be invaluable to us in our community," stated Young. "We are a community that has to have law enforcement "generalists" because of our size and location. Chief Grace can assist in further training for the officers, as well as take care of the administrative duties of the department, leaving the officers to spend more time on the street and in the community."

Chief Grace said, "I am excited to have joined the city team of employees working to make a positive difference in Vernonia." As an active motorcyclist, Chief Grace visited Vernonia many times over the years as he traveled the roads between Astoria and the Portland metro area. "I have stopped many times for fuel and refreshments in Vernonia."

He was able to participate in the annual Vernonia Jamboree last weekend, and

actually led the parade with Administrator Bob Young. "After the parade, Young introduced me to many community members as we walked along Bridge Street, meeting and greeting, including dining at the Lion's food tent. It offered me a great opportunity to say hello to people from all walks of life who call Vernonia home."

As the Police Chief, Grace said that he plans to focus on enhancing law enforcement practices already in place by working and learning from the professional group of

officers, volunteers, and city personnel that make up the Vernonia Police Department. "I feel fortunate to be working with the City Administrator and Sergeant Mike Kay, who served as Interim Police Chief. I want to move us forward

with business practices that will take the Police Department to the next level of providing community law enforcement services. I invite the citizens of our community to stop by and say hello."

Sergeant Mike Kay filled the position as Interim Chief since last October when the former chief resigned. "He has done a terrific job for us," Young remarked. "He is a valuable asset to the department, and will be of great assistance to the new Chief as he gets acquainted with the community."

Choosing a new Police Chief was one of Administrator Young's first major decisions. He has only been on the job in Vernonia for two months. Young came from Bonney Lake, Washington, where he served for eight years as an elected Mayor. He also served as the acting City Administrator for six of those years. Following those eight years, he went back to Graduate School and received his Masters of Public Administration from the University of Washington, graduating in December of 2008. "Vernonia is an exciting town that is rebuilding itself following the devastating flooding of December, 2007. I am looking forward to working with such talented staff, such as Chief Grace. We can only look forward as we work together to continue building one of Columbia County's great cities."

FINAL PUBLIC NOTICE

PURSUANT TO 44 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, SECTION 9.12, THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY HEREBY GIVES FINAL NOTICE UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER #11988. NOTICE IS GIVEN FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECT:

Project Description: The project will involve the elevation and/or acquisition & demolition of single family residential houses and other structures located in the floodplain. All of these structures are located within the city of Vernonia, Oregon or its outskirts. Many of the houses are located on Alder Avenue, Cherry Street, Elm Street, Heather Lane, Jefferson Avenue, Mist Drive, Adams Street, Riverside Drive and north Mist Drive in Vernonia. Federal funding assistance to either elevate or acquire and demolish/remove these houses is provided through two federal funding assistance programs: Flood Mitigation Assistance Program and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Due to extensive awareness of this effort, the limited impact on the community and the overall beneficial effect of this action, the initial notice has been combined with this final notice for Flood Mitigation Assistance funding. Hazard Mitigation Assistance funding is available on a competitive basis for houses and structures damage during the federally declared disaster FEMA DR 1733 OR. This is the final public notice for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program initial public notice was published in The Chronicle and Sentinel-Mist on January 19 and 26 and February 2 and 9, 2008.

Program: Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, FY 2008 and FY 2009 and DR-1733-OR Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Statement of Why Action is Located in Floodplain: The project action involves both the elevation and the acquisition & demolition of residential structures currently located in the floodplain within the City of Vernonia and surrounding areas.

Significant Facts: Structures funded through the Hazard Grant Mitigation Program or the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program will be individually evaluated for elevation or acquisition/demolition to determine which method is most reasonable and effective for that structure. Demolition of houses will be from willing sellers, where the acquired properties will be dedicated in perpetuity to uses that are compatible with open space, recreation, or wetland practices.

Alternatives Considered: (1.) Acquisition of the structure and subsequent demolition (2) Relocation of the structure outside the floodplain. (3.) Elevation of structure. (4.) Do Nothing

Applicability of State/Local Floodplain Standards: The project action conforms to all applicable State/Local floodplain standards.

Affects to the Floodplain: The project will be conditioned (construction/grading limited to the "non-flood season" and use of Best Management Practices, BPMS, to minimize erosion and sedimentation, control pollutants, and maximize habitat improvements) so it will have minimal short term affects to the floodplain or from flooding. For structures that are elevated, the houses will remain in the same location and, therefore, be subject to future flooding. However, the elevations will be designed and utilized to minimize affects from flooding per applicable flood reduction techniques and compliant with adopted flood ordinances. The design criteria will account for forces related to flow velocity and debris impacts and no encroachment into the floodway will occur.

Responsible Official: Flood Mitigation Assistance Program and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Bill Haack, Columbia County HMGP Coordinator
1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064
503-429-5291 ext. 105

Further information and specific structures to be elevated, including any pertinent maps can be obtained by contacting:

Dan Brown - Principal, Columbia County Flood Relief
PO Box 388, 850 Maple Street • Vernonia, OR 97064
(503) 429-4948

ALL COMMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL WITHIN FIFTEEN (15) DAYS OF THE START OF THIS PUBLICATION NOTICE.



New Police Chief Frank Grace is sworn in by City Administrator Bob Young.