

Vernonia City News...

At the September 8 City Council Meeting:

New Public Works Director Introduced-- Mayor Sally Harrison introduced new Public Works Director Bob Ruhl. Ruhl has been hired as a part-time Director, and comes to Vernonia by way of Garden City, Idaho. He has thirty years of Public Works experience.

Council Hears First Reading of UGB Expansion for Schools-- After a public hearing, City Council heard the first reading of Ordinance 862 for approval of an application to expand the city Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to include twenty-two acres north of Spencer Park that would be used specifically for construction of a new school campus. The ordinance also includes adoption of a Columbia County Coordinated Population Projection for the City of Vernonia. Former Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson, currently under contract with the city to assist with special projects, gave a brief history of the UGB expansion process, followed by a staff report by City Planner Carole Connell. Connell explained that this was just one step in a long process. Connell noted that the Vernonia Planning Commission and the Columbia County Planning Commission have both recommended approval. A final approval will be needed from the County Board of Commissioners as well as from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. Connell explained that in addition, the property will need to be annexed into the city, and then rezoned, and the School District will have to apply for a Conditional Use Permit before construction can begin. Connell also explained that if a school bond is not passed, the property will need to be re-zoned again and taken back out of the UGB because current plans will allow for a very narrow use. Council heard the first reading of the ordinance without placing any restrictions on passage. The second reading and approval was scheduled for the City Council Meeting on September 21.

Mayor Appoints Two to City Committees-- Mayor Harrison appointed DeAnna Pearl as an ex-officio member of the Vernonia Community Learning

Center (VCLC) Committee. Pearl is currently employed as Director of the Vernonia Prevention Coalition and has an office in the VCLC building. Mayor Harrison also appointed Tony Gilbertson to the Public Works Committee.

Council Approves Transfer of Funds-- Council approved Resolution 16-09 which transferred funds within the approved 2009-2010 Budget. According to City Administrator Bob Young's staff report, with the final year end audit report, there is a recognized need to transfer funds to increase revenue in four funds. The following funds received increases in revenue: Police Revenue-- \$4,610.85; Airport Revenue-- \$3,000.00; VCLC Revenue-- \$9123.29; Streets Revenue-- \$38,692.65.

Council Amends Resolution for Workers Compensation-- Council approved an amendment to Resolution 15-09, changing language and the amount of the hourly rate that volunteers would be compensated under the city Workers' Compensation Coverage program.

Vernonia Officer Recognized-- Vernonia Police Chief Frank Grace announced that Vernonia Police Officer Shawn Carnihan, who recently completed basic training at the Oregon Police Academy, was recognized at the Academy with the Leo B. App, Jr. Outstanding Shooter Award.

Vernonia Prevention Coalition Plans Activities-- Vernonia Prevention Coalition (VPC) Director DeAnna Pearl, who has been on the job for two months, reported on progress by the VPC. Pearl announced that the VPC has received the second year of their grant for \$125,000, and that she has tracked \$122,000 of matching funds to date. Pearl reported on Coalition membership, goals, and objectives. She also announced several upcoming trainings and activities that are being sponsored by the VPC. Pearl also announced several future plans. "We want a safe community in which our kids can grow to their full potential," said Pearl.

Water Rate Study To Begin-- Council approved a request from new Public Works Director Bob Ruhl to autho-

rize a Task Order with City Engineer Dale Merrill for completion of a Water Rate Study. The cost is not to exceed \$23,150 and was to be initiated immediately and completed no later than November 12, 2009.

Council Adopts Resolution in Support of New Schools-- Council adopted a Resolution in support of the Vernonia School District 47J School Bond to finance the cost of capital construction and improvements of new schools for the community.

Council Adopts County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update-- Council adopted the 2009 Columbia County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. The document provides information for all seven cities in the county, including Vernonia, and describes the planning process, presents hazard profiles, a vulnerability analysis, and mitigation strategies. According to the staff report provided by Jim Johnson, it is expected that newly-formed City Emergency Preparedness Committee will use the information provided in the plan as part of its drafting of an Emergency Plan for the city.

At The September 21 City Council Meeting:

City Opts Out of Competitive Bid Process for Buy-Out Demolitions-- Acting as the Local Contract Review Board for the City of Vernonia, the City Council oversaw a hearing to adopt findings in support of exempting the Columbia County Buy-out Resolution and Program Demolition Contract from competitive low bid requirements. In findings presented during her staff report, City Planner Carole Connell reminded the Board that the City of Vernonia has been awarded a Community Development Block Grant to implement a federal buy-out program for properties substantially damaged in the flood event of December 2007. The buy-out process will result in transfer of title of the properties to the city, and will be deed restricted prohibiting future development. The city will enter into contracts to demolish homes on those properties. The city proposes to use the Competitive Proposal process set forth in ORS279C.400 and in sections 10 and

11 of City of Vernonia Ordinance No. 812 to select a demolition contractor. These public improvement contracts will be solicited and awarded by determining the proposal most advantageous to the city based on evaluation factors set forth in the request for proposals. An exemption must be granted by City Council in order to choose a Competitive Proposal process as opposed to a Competitive Bid process. According to Connell, a Competitive Proposal process would be unlikely to result in favoritism in awarding a contract, will result in more demolition materials being recycled, and would reduce costs associated with demolition.

As the Local Contract Review Board, Council adopted the presented findings in support of granting an exemption. Council later adopted Resolution 20-09 authorizing the exemption.

Mayor Extends Special Thanks to City Staff-- Mayor Sally Harrison invited three city staff members, Public Works Foreman Jeff Burch, Police Sergeant Mike Kay, and City Recorder Joanne Glass and commended them for their dedicated service to the city and community of Vernonia that has been "...above and beyond the call of duty." Each employee was presented a "...small token of the cities appreciation," and also presented Burch's wife Heidi with flowers.

Council Approves Expenditure for Fish Stocking-- Based on a recommendation from the Parks Committee, Council approved the expenditure of \$400 from the Parks Contingency Fund to be used to purchase fish to stock Vernonia Lake this Fall. The City funds will be added to a \$600 donation from Larry and Gail Snethen and the Vernonia Lions Club.

Council Approves Changes to City UGB-- Council heard the second reading of and approved Ordinance 862, amending the Vernonia Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to re-locate the Vernonia Public School Complex and adopting the Columbia County Coordinated Population Projection for Vernonia.

