

Vernonia City News...

At the May 31 Special City Council Meeting:

Council Agrees to Interview Process for City Administrator Search—With the assistance of Jennie Messmer for the League of Oregon Cities (LOC), Council developed and agreed to a process to be used for interviewing candidates for the vacant City Administrator position. The LOC has been hired to manage the recruitment process; on May 17, 2011 Council reviewed a list of potential candidates and directed that phone interviews be held with the top ranked group as an initial screening process.

At the May 31 meeting, Council agreed to a format for the hiring process. Interviews with final candidates have been scheduled for June 23-24, 2011, with June 23 being a social event for the candidates along with tours of the city conducted by Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson. June 24 would include panel interviews, with the use of three panels: 1) the Mayor and Council, 2) a Community Panel, 3) an Employee Panel made up of city department heads. The Community Panel would consist of five members, with the Mayor and each Councilor appointing one person to the panel. After the interviews, the Community Panel and Employee Panel would report to Council with a summary of strengths and weaknesses, but would give no formal ranking of the candidates. A travel stipend of \$500 will be made available to each candidate, payable upon submittal of receipts for legitimate

travel expenses. Messmer and Johnson will prepare instructions for the panels and interview questions.

Council then moved to Executive Session to discuss the results of the phone interviews.

After returning from Executive Session, Mayor Josette Mitchell announced that the Council was moving forward with three candidates; names would not be available until after background checks had been completed and the candidates had accepted an the invitation to the interview.

At the June 6, 2011 City Council Meeting:

Council Holds Works Session on Floodplain Enforcement—Council held a special work session with Christine Shirley from the Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Dennis Segrist from Oregon Emergency Management to discuss compliance with FEMA mandated Floodplain Enforcement and Vernonia's continued eligibility for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). According to information provided, Vernonia's Floodplain Ordinance allows property owners in the community to purchase subsidized flood insurance, but the community eligibility depends on the City enforcing their own ordinances. According to Shirley, enforcement includes three main areas for compliance: 1) a permitting program and procedures that ensure

continued compliance with the NFIP, 2) enforcement mechanisms that deal with violations that have been identified, 3) substantial damage and improvement evaluations after disasters.

According to Shirley, FEMA periodically does a Community Assistance Visit (CAV) which is an audit of floodplain enforcement procedures and also an educational opportunity for the City to learn about compliance. In 2006 Vernonia received a CAV which identified some deficiencies in the administration of the program and some violations. According to Shirley, this CAV has not been closed and needs to be addressed immediately. Shirley stated that if the remaining violations and the Administration deficiencies cannot be addressed to the satisfaction of FEMA, FEMA could put the city on probation for one year, which would cause every flood insurance policy in the city to receive a \$50 surcharge. If FEMA believes the City is not making an effort to deal with the issues they could suspend the community from the NFIP, at which time no flood insurance would be available in the city—no one could purchase new flood insurance or renew current policies.

Shirley said that she is available to assist the City in developing a Floodplain Enforcement Program and that FEMA is expecting to see progress by the City by this summer.

Council Adopts Budget—Council voted to adopt the 2011-2012 proposed

budget. The total budget appropriates \$4,622, 024.00 while imposing a tax rate of \$5.8163/\$1,000 assessed valuation. Council also approved accepting \$15,000 in State Revenue Sharing Funds.

Council Approves Updated Rules and Procedures—Council approved slight revisions to the City Council Rules and Procedures.

Council Approves License for Temporary Staging Area—Council approved an agreement for a license for a temporary staging area for Five Star Builders on property recently acquired by the City from the State of Oregon. The property is adjacent to the site where West Oregon Electric Coop (WOEC) is constructing their new headquarters. Five Star Builders is under contract with WOEC to construct a power station and underground utility lines around Vernonia and will now lease the City owned site for the purpose of a construction staging area for one year. Five Star Builders was previously leasing the site from the State of Oregon.

Council Approves Hiring of Code Enforcement Officer—Council approved the hiring of Brent Thompson as a temporary employee to do code enforcement work. Thompson has already been hired by the City to serve as a volunteer Reserve Police Officer.

2011 Vernonia Summer Meals Program

Vernonia will offer a Summer Meals Program for all children in the community, regardless of income levels. The program is a collaboration between the Vernonia School District, the St. Helens School District, Pioneer Baptist church and the Vernonia Prevention Coalition.

The team has worked since January to identify potential host, meal sites and logistics. All meals provided for youth between the ages of 1-18yrs are provided free through the USDA summer meals program. In Vernonia, both breakfast and Lunch will be served from June 20-Aug. 19th.

Between breakfast and lunch, a calendar of events is currently being planned. To date, some of the projects are music exploration, gardening, physical activities, talent discovery, library program and more. "The more opportunities we give our kids to explore their strengths, the higher the protective factors they develop to

be more successful in their growing up years, "states DeAnna Pearl, VPC Director. "It is all about reducing the risks they face every day, and increase their potential by participating in healthy activities."

Families are welcome to come and participate in all activities. However, children under the ages of 10 need to have an older sibling, parent or guardian to supervise. The summer meals program will have volunteers available to help with meals and activities but the program is not set up to provide day care. Kids are free to come and go but the meal times are set in stone. "We can only provide the meals during posted times per the USDA food program requirements," comments Cathy Meyer, Summer Meals Coordinator. Parents and care providers are able to purchase

meals with their child: Breakfast \$1.25 and Lunch \$2.00. All proceeds go to the St. Helen's Summer Meals program to cover the cost of the meal.

If you are hosting a camp, activity, project or just a parent please feel free to contact us. Volunteers are always welcome. We also need groups to host an activity during the summer. Volunteering is not necessary to feed yours or other children. Contact DeAnna Pearl at (503) 369-7370 or Cathy Meyers at (503) 522-5311 or (503) 429 8033. See you this summer!

Columbia County to Hold CPAC Elections

Columbia County will be holding Citizen Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) elections, for those positions whose term is expiring.

CPACs provide advice and recommendations to the County Land Use Planning entities, including the Planning Department, the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. CPAC members serve for two-year terms.

Each CPAC is divided into neighborhoods. Members represent neighborhoods in which they reside or own property. Residents and/or

property owners within the neighborhoods elect their CPAC members. There must be at least five voters from each neighborhood to hold an election for the neighborhood. In order to be eligible to vote you must show either picture identification proving that you live in the CPAC neighborhood where you will cast your ballot; or a tax statement proving that you own property within the neighborhood where you are voting. You may only vote once in your CPAC area.

The elections will be held in the following locations, and at the

following times:

Scappoose-Spitzenberg
June 14, 2011 @ 6:30PM
Scappoose Library

Upper Nehalem
June 14, 2011 @ 7:00 PM
Vernonia City Hall
1001 Bridge Street,
Vernonia

For more information about the boundaries of the CPAC and the elections process, please contact Glen Higgins, Chief Planner; Land Development Services, County Courthouse, (503) 397-1501.

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