

# Vernonia City News...

## At the July 18, 2011 Vernonia City Council Meeting

**Parrow Makes Proposal for Appointing Replacement Councilors**—Councilor Randy Parrow stated during his Committee reports that he has heard that, in the event of a successful Recall of Councilors Willow Burch and Marilyn Nicks, there is concern in the community about the process that will be used to select replacement Councilors. The City Charter reads that in the event of a recall, Replacement Councilors are chosen by the remaining Councilors. Parrow suggested that three panels of five citizens each, for a total of fifteen, be chosen by lottery, and that those citizen panels choose the replacement Councilors. The final appointment would have to come from the Council, according to the City Charter. According to Parrow's plan, citizens would be able to sign up for the lottery and there would be some restrictions about who could serve—citizens must be registered voters in the City of Vernonia, and could not have held elected office for the last eighteen months or be a City of Vernonia employee.

**Bernal Questions Johnson About Mediation**—During Topics from the floor, citizen Sharon Bernal asked for and received permission from Council to address questions to Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson. Bernal then asked Johnson if he was helping aid as the mediator for the communication breakdown between the City Council and interim City Administrator Bill Haack. Johnson responded that in late April, early May, he interviewed all five Councilors, City Recorder Joann Glass and Haack about trying to improve communication between the group. Johnson said it was a volunteer effort and that he prepared a report and turned it into Council in early May. Bernal then asked Johnson if Haack step out of that process in any way. Johnson replied, no.

**Council Makes Recommendation for DAD's Recycling**—Council considered information provided by City Planner Carole Connell concerning the Recycling Center being developed by DAD's Recycling on Mist Drive. They also considered information provided by Roger Lindsley, who is assisting DAD's Recycling with their business plan. DAD's Conditional Use permit expired on June 30, 2011, and they have already been granted several

extensions. According to Lindsley, the project is nearing completion—the required fencing, gate and containers will be complete and on site very shortly. There is still a need for approximately thirty-three loads of gravel to complete the driveway and required pullouts. Lindsley says that because financial restriction, as well as limited availability of gravel, the gravel can be completed in the next eleven months by DAD's by bringing in three loads each month.

Council agreed to give DAD's one month to complete the fence and gate and get all needed containers on site, as well as three months to get nine loads of gravel delivered. DAD's is required to report back to Council in thirty days with an update on their progress, and again in three months.

Lindsley also noted that DAD's is working on a plan to become a non-profit and is looking for interested citizens to sit on the Board of Directors for a Community Recycling Center modeled after CART'm Recycling in Manzanita.

**Council Agrees on How to Distribute K9 Funds**—According to Mayor Josette Mitchell, the City holds approximately \$3,000 in funds that were raised to support the Police K9 program, which no longer exists. The City needs to find a way to distribute those funds. Mitchell contacted all the citizen donors to the program as well as two County United Way organizations to see if they had a preference as to where the funds go. Mitchell suggested donating the funds to support the K9 program in Clatskanie, OR. Citizen donor Helen Hudson suggested the funds go directly to the Vernonia High School Football team for new uniforms. Council discussed several options and agreed to donate \$500 to Vernonia Ambulance Association, \$500 to the Clatskanie K9 program and the balance, (approximately \$2,000) to the Vernonia Boosters to use as their Board sees fit.

**Council Approves Ground Lease for School Property**—Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson reported that the City has received possession of the Vernonia School property as part of the land swap involving the new school property and FEM buyout of the current school property. Johnson presented Council with a Ground Lease agreement for approval that he already had the School District sign. The lease covers the 20.85 acre site that is the

current school site. The lease is for five years. And includes an early termination provision when the new Spencer park is completed on the site, although the School retains the rights to the football and baseball fields for the full five years. The lease can be renewed for two additional terms. The District has agreed to make the property available for community uses consistent with current policies, providing for District use as first priority. The School district is responsible for all indemnification and insurance, as well as all maintenance. There is no cash rent being paid by the School District.

**Council Approves Extension of Contract With Johnson**—Council approved a one month extension of the Personal Services Contract with Jim Johnson for City Administrator Pro Tem until August 31, 2011. The amendment to the current contract also extended the Responsibility Allocation Agreement that divides the work load between Johnson and Mayor Josette Mitchell, who is volunteering to work half-time as City Administrator Pro Tem, along side Johnson.

**Council Approves Right-of Way at Airport**—Council approved the establishment of a perpetual street right-of-way (ROW) on City property at the Vernonia Airport. The current access road is neither a City nor County Road. The City is considering applying for grant funding to develop a business park; most funding agencies will not provide funds without public access. The ROW means the City can make applications.

There are no plans at this time to develop the ROW.

**Council Approves Resolution to Apply for Street Funds**—Council approved Resolution 17-11 to apply for Special City Allotment (SCA) funds from the State of Oregon for improvements to city streets. The SCA funds would be used for a three inch asphalt overlay on a portion of A Street, which would connect this project to several other SCA projects from past years.

**Council Approves Adding Shay Park Addition**—Council approved Resolution 18-11 adding a parcel of land acquired through a FEMA buyout to the Parks land inventory. The parcel is directly adjacent to Shay Park on Adams Avenue.

**Council Approves Open Space Temporary Easement**—Council approved Resolution 19-11 which establishes a legal framework allowing for neighbors to take control of properties acquired by the City through FEMA buy-outs. The temporary lease/easement agreements between neighbors and the City for use of the properties have several restrictions, and can be terminated by the city with thirty days notice.

**Mayor Appoints Davis to VCLC Committee**—With the approval of Council, Mayor Josette Mitchell appointed Carol Davis to the Vernonia Community Learning Center (VCLC) Committee.

## City of Vernonia Corrects Inaccuracies

There have been statements published in our community that need correction and/or clarification.

All loan reserve funds that have been required by the City of Vernonia auditors have been completely funded in the 2011-2012 City budget.

The Brown & Caldwell engineering firm presented the Vernonia Wastewater Treatment Draft Conceptual Design Report in March 2010. The cost estimate for the wastewater option recommended by the City Public Works committee was approximately \$10 million. City Administrator Bob Young received

that report and passed it on to the City Council.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011, all five Council members were informed of the history and status related to the personnel issue with employee Michael Kay.

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Vernonia City Council was introduced to Kathy Peck, a labor and employment law specialist and David Nelson, a CityCounty Insurance representative. Discussion was held regarding the legal implications and risk management issues related to the personnel issue with employee Michael Kay. All five Council members were present.

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