

from the editor

On March 1st through the 3rd the community of Vernonia experienced their own version of March Madness as the Vernonia High School boys basketball team took part in the final eight of the State Championships in Pendleton. It had been seventeen years since the Logger Boys had qualified for the State finals and the town rallied behind the team, fundraising to send the team and the school pep band, and traveling in large numbers to be there in person to support their Loggers.

It was just another example of Vernonia Spirit—people working together to support one another and make good things happen.

At the double elimination tournament the Loggers suffered what could have been a crushing defeat in their first game, a heartbreaking 38-36 loss to Regis. It was a game in which the Loggers led by as many as 10 points late in the second half. No one would have been surprised the next morning when the Logger took the court against Central Linn if the boys hadn't come out flat, rolled over and gave up. And

that's almost what happened.

Down by nine points near the end of the third quarter, and certainly not playing as well as they knew they were capable, the Loggers gave themselves a gut check, decided they weren't done yet and came roaring back, led by an unusual suspect.

This time it wasn't flashy Paul Jiranek, or sharp shooting Craig Weller, or big men Austin Cutright or Austin Edgar who took charge. It was defensive specialist Byron Weller—the guy you often overlook on the court, the guy who does all the dirty work but usually isn't the star—who stepped up and scored seven straight huge, important, game changing points for the Loggers. "Byron's energy carried us," said Logger head coach David Weller after the tournament.

No, the Loggers weren't done yet.

This team, and the fans who were there to support them, showed true Logger Pride and Vernonia Spirit. That never say die, never give up, never quit spirit, that most Vernonians I've

come to know over the years possess. That pride that has carried this town through several floods, bad economies and countless other tragedies and tough times.

Apparently that pride and spirit is rubbing off.

The boys fought back in that game and won it in the final minute. They went on to win their final game of the tournament, and the season, and celebrate by bringing home the fourth place trophy. They didn't give up, they found a way to come out on top and they made themselves, and the rest of us, proud to be Loggers. They did it through hard work and by believing in themselves. And when it looked like they might be out of options, the spark that brought them back to life came from an unlikely source.

"They showed they still had some fight left in them," said coach Weller.

They showed true Logger Pride and Vernonia Spirit.

Scott Laird
Editor and Publisher

An Opinion: For Vernonia City Council the Process is Working

By Scott Laird

About this time last year the Vernonia City Council was headed towards trouble—trouble that lasted until August and ended with three new City Councilors being selected and appointed to serve the citizens of our community.

2011 was a trying year for those of us who watch and are involved with city politics here. But with the appointment of the new council members and the return of City Administrator Bill Haack, things at the Vernonia City Hall appear to have calmed down quite a bit. The City Council, City Committees and city staff are working through some fairly complicated and important issues and are moving forward, sometimes slowly and not always so surely, but forward none-the-less.

It's a process and sometimes following the process is laborious.

At the March 5, 2011 City Council meeting, Council was presented with a recommendation from the Vernonia Public Works Committee for a new model for water rates in the city. This is a project that has been in progress for quite some time. The Public Works Committee has been meeting regularly to discuss the information gathered during

a Water Rate Study and to develop a plan they could send to the City Council. The Council and Public Works Committee have also met together several times over the last few months in work sessions to hammer out the details of this proposal. It has been a slow and arduous process with disagreements and different points of view. In the end not everyone agreed with the final product that Council was presented, and the Council ended up reworking the proposal, sending it back to staff for more information and planning to meet in another special meeting before the already announced Public Hearing on March 20.

But that is the work of government and that is the process and that is what this City Council is working their way through in order to reach an end result that they believe will be best for the citizens they represent.

At the March 5th meeting the Councilors discussion was long and lively, sometimes heated, mostly intelligent and eventually led to consensus—that they needed more information and another meeting. Yep, that's the process at work.

The Vernonia City Council also recently worked together to pass an Ordinance to create a uniformed structure for their City Committees.

This has been a goal and a high priority for Mayor Josette Mitchell since she took office in January of 2011. Again, it wasn't easy and there was some disagreement among the City Council about the details, but in the end, they got the ordinance passed.

The members of this Council are showing that they are willing to put in a lot of time, energy and hard work in order to comprehend the details of the issues they are being asked to debate. City Administrator Haack is doing a good job of shepherding the Council through a long list of projects and the work they need to accomplish, scheduling work sessions and providing background information when it's requested. The Councilors are asking a lot of questions and the discussions can sometimes be agonizingly long, but in the end they are accomplishing the work of the City.

Next up is the City Budget. Council will meet again this year with the City Budget Committee over several weeks to hash out their differences and reach an agreement to approve a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. With funds still tight, this Council may have some tough decisions to make. The public budget process is scheduled to officially begin on April 3 with the presentation of the Budget Message. This will be

VERNONIA'S
voice
reflecting the spirit of our community

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another test for this City Council as they continue their work on behalf of the citizens of Vernonia.
So far the process is working.

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