

# Vernonia City News...

## At the March 5, 2012 City Council Meeting:

**Council Discusses Water Rate Schedule Changes**—After accepting a recommendation from the City Public Works Committee, Council discussed the recommendation, made changes to the proposal and asked City Administrator Bill Haack to provide them with more information. Council then scheduled a special meeting on March 12 at 7:00 PM to review the additional information. A Public Hearing is scheduled for March 19 at 6:00 PM prior to the regular City Council Meeting where the Council will hear public testimony on proposed rate changes. (See article on front page)

**Council Discusses Budget Schedule**—Council was presented with a proposed schedule for the City Budget process for fiscal year 2012-13. According to the schedule, which is still being finalized, the City Budget Committee, which is made up of the five members of City Council and five citizen members, is scheduled to begin the process with a preliminary meeting on March 13, 2012. City Budget Officer Bill Haack is sched-

uled to present the Budget Message on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Committee is then scheduled to meet on each successive Tuesday evening until they complete their work of creating a proposed budget to be adopted by the City Council before June 30, 2012. All meetings are currently scheduled for 6:00 PM at the Vernonia Community Learning Center.

**Council Adopts Emergency Plan**—Based on a recommendation by the current Emergency Preparedness Committee, Council adopted the Columbia County All Hazards Mitigation Plan as the official Vernonia Emergency Operations Plan. The current approved Emergency Operations Plan for Vernonia was written in 2005 and is out of date. The Committee has been working to update the current city plan, but agreed, with input from Columbia County Emergency Operations Director Peter Tassoni that the County plan is more comprehensive and would meet Vernonia's needs in a disaster situation. According to Vernonia Police Chief Mike Conner, a member of the Vernonia Emergency Preparedness Committee, the City does plan to continue work to update and eventually adopt

their own plan.

**Council Establishes Emergency Preparedness Committee**—Council passed Resolution 10-12 which officially establishes an Emergency Preparedness Committee for the City of Vernonia and prescribes its powers and duties.

**Mayor Appoints Brown to Emergency Preparedness Committee**—With approval from Council, Mayor Josette Mitchell appointed Mark Brown to the Vernonia Emergency Preparedness Committee.

**Council Adopts LEP and Section 3 Plans**—Council adopted Resolution 07-12, a Limited English Proficiency Plan, which establishes protocols for the City for communications with customers and vendors who do not speak or read English with proficiency.

Council also adopted Resolution 08-12, the Section 3 Plan, to comply with requirements by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Topics From the Floor**—Sam Potter, who is a member of the Vernonia Pub-

lic Works Committee, spoke against a recommendation from the Public Works Committee that was on the Agenda to be Discussed by Council during this meeting.

Jim Tierney gave Council an update from Columbia County Flood Recovery (CCFR) on the impact on Substantially Damaged Structures in Vernonia after the 2007 flood. According to Tierney's report, 210 homes have been reviewed by CCFR, 134 were found to be Substantially Damaged and 90% of those are expected to be cleared by CCFR. Tierney expects 13 structures to remain that will require enforcement by the City of Vernonia.

**Council Meets Sheriff Candidate**—City Council heard a presentation from Dave Fuller who is running for Columbia County Sheriff. Fuller is a twenty-eight year veteran of the Columbia County Sheriff's Department, where he has served as a school resource officer, on the Columbia Enforcement Narcotics Team, as a patrol deputy, as a temporary Sergeant, and is currently the Columbia River Patrol deputy. He lives in Scappoose.

## City of Vernonia Considers Changes to Water Rates *continued from front page*

The demand charge or base rate comprises those costs associated with serving customers irrespective of the amount of water used. The City of Vernonia water utility demand charges include meter reading, water billing, accounting, collections, maintenance, capital costs, metering, and management. "The City water service is the equivalent of managing the business of providing water," says Vernonia City Administrator Bill Haack.

The commodity charge is a per unit fee based on units of water (one unit of water equals 1000 gallons). This charge captures system costs that tend to vary with the total water used plus those operations and maintenance expenses and capital costs associated with service to customers under average and peak load conditions. Typically commodity charges recover O & M expenses of supply, treatment, pumping, and distribution.

The alternative rate structure under review is similar in structure to the existing rate schedule, add-

ing a meter multiplier that varies the base rate based on meter size (e.g. 0.5", 0.75", 1.0", 1.5", 2.0", 4.0" and 6.0"). The base rate will vary by meter size as will the amount of water included in the base rate. The commodity charge under review is a flat rate that kicks in after the base rate allowance is used and charges the customer by the amount of units used.

OAWU reviewed the City of Vernonia existing rate structure, and took as direction the City Council goals of establishing a rate based on the following assumptions: (1) water fund budget of \$550,000, (2) base rate plus up to five tier blocks, (3) incorporate a meter multiplier, (4)

assess need for in/out of town differential, (5) assess need for stand-alone commercial rate, and (6) establish a reserve and annual index. In addition, OAWU took analysis produced by the Public Works Committee members Dale Webb and Roger Lindsley.

## On the Shelves: What's Happening at the Vernonia Library

The Vernonia Public Library is pleased to announce the books and activities that will comprise The Vernonia Community Reads for 2012. Funded by a joint grant from The Columbia County Cultural Coalition and The Friends of the Vernonia Library, the ultimate goal of the project is to create and perpetuate an ongoing love of books, the arts and the humanities. Youngsters will be reading and participating in an activity related to Addie Boswell's book, *The Rain Stomper*. Ms. Boswell will be at the library Tuesday, April 10 at 3:30 PM to do an interactive reading, talk about how the book was made and lead a drawing activity on character development. Young adults will be reading *The*

*Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins. The activities relating to this book are a joint undertaking between Vernonia High School and library staff and will include a food drive, discussions, and art projects. Adults will be reading Craig Lesley's books—especially *The Sky Fisherman* with Mr. Lesley reading from and discussing his writing Saturday, April 14 at 4:00 PM in the library.

Several copies of each of these titles are available in the library. The public is encouraged to read the selected books, take part in the associated activities and enjoy the art work and projects displayed during National Library Week—April 8-14.

### Upcoming Vernonia City Council Meetings

Upcoming City Council Meetings are scheduled for:

Monday, March 19, 2012

Monday, April 2, 2012

Monday, April 16, 2012

*Dates and Times subject to change due to conflicts of schedules*



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