

Vernonia City News...

At the March 18, 2013 City Council Meeting:

CC Rider to Reduce Service-In a report provided to City Council, the Columbia County Rider Transit Service announced they will be reducing service to the Vernonia area beginning April 1, 2013. (see story on front page) Transit Director Janet Wright was on the agenda to appear before Council to explain the service reductions, but cancelled her appearance at the last minute. Citizen Judy Riley provided a letter and also spoke from the floor against the reduction in service.

Council Authorizes Agreement for Biosolids-Council authorized the Mayor to sign an amended Intergovernmental Agreement with Clean Water Services for the hauling and land application of biosolids that are required to be removed from the wastewater lagoons as part of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. The contract assumes a range of biosolids removal of 6,000 to 12,000 wet tons with a cost between \$200,000 and \$340,000. The cost for

the dredging, onsite processing and lagoon clean up has not yet been contracted.

Council Authorizes Consulting Work-Council authorized the City Administrator to sign a contract for \$5,000 with Shannon and Wilson Geotechnical and Environmental Consultants to provide testing support and geotechnical advice for the Flume Replacement Project.

9-1-1 Operating Renewal-The Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District will have an Operating Renewal levy on the May 21, 2013 election ballot. New District Administrator Jeanine Dilley introduced herself to Council and explained that the five year levy is to maintain services. There will be no increase- the renewal rate of 29 cents will remain the same as the current operating levy. 9-1-1 Board of Directors member Kathy Denkla asked Council to support the levy either individually or as a Council.

Topics From the Floor-Citizen Sally Harrison asked Council to provide better care for the Vernonia Memorial Cemetery. Harrison suggested a private fundraising campaign to make renovations to the City owned caretaker house. Council asked the City Administrator to look into any requirements on the property and chose to plan for a work session for March 25th to discuss future care for the cemetery.

Citizen Casey Mitchell asked Council to consider blocking the north end of California Avenue, a gravel road which runs through the old O-A Mill site, to keep it from being further damaged by drivers traveling at high rates of speed. Council asked the City Administrator to look into this.

Council Thanks WOEC-On behalf of their citizens Council thanked the WOEC Board of Directors for allowing a crew to remove a group of trees on Weed Avenue that presented a hazard.

City Administrator Report

By Bill Haack

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT PROJECT

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT COST ESTIMATE

The wastewater treatment plant cost estimate is still rough, but is in the range of \$5.25 to \$6.0 million. It is composed of three main cost components: (1) Flume Improvements - \$300,000 to \$350,000, (2) Biosolids Removal, \$600,000 to \$800,000, and (3) WWTP Construction and overall Project/Construction Management, \$4,500,000. In addition there are other costs that are associated with the work: Otak, Shannon and Wilson, Tetra Teach and City of Vernonia will have direct costs for project management, testing, compliance, and project administration.

WWTP FINANCING PLAN

The financing plan for the WWTP improvements is evolving. The open DEQ Loan R93642 will be closed following the completion of the Flume Improvement Project. The total expense of that loan will be approximately \$4.7 million. The City will pursue a second DEQ CWSRF loan for the balance of the construction project. The new Point Source loan application will be approximately \$6.0 million. The terms of repayment will be twenty years from the date of construction completion for both loans - we are expecting that that date will be December 2015 assuming construction is completed by December 2014. The current loan carries a coupon rate of 2.93%; the estimated interest rate on the new debt will be 1.96%. The reduced interest rate is the primary reason to close out the current loan and pursue a new loan. The City will also look at pursuing a line of credit to facilitate the construction process through

a conventional financial institution. In addition, the City may refinance existing debt to provide some positive relief to our rate payers. The City invited a representative from Wedbush Securities to the Public Works Committee 3-26-13 who will describe the preferred financing option for the City.

WWTP ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The City of Vernonia along with development team members from Otak, Tetra Tech, Pacific Habitat and Shannon and Wilson, met on 3-13-13 with NOAA National Marine Fisheries Services to lay out areas of agreement and concern as it relates to completing an environmental assessment. The meeting will also be attended by staff from Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. DEQ staff serves as the financing agent, the regulator and the compliance arm of WEPA, from which they get their funding. We are asking, as a result of the hyporheic discharge infiltration process will there be an impact to fish habitat? What we are assessing and trying to reach agreement on is the model that is used by NOAA NMFS and Shannon & Wilson//Tetra Tech.

BIOSOLIDS PLAN

Otak developed a Biosolids Sampling Plan which is approved by DEQ. Otak will meet with City staff this week to establish our plan for implementing the sampling plan. Otak is also working on a comprehensive Biosolids Plan. Otak identified a firm (Alexin Analytical Laboratories) to complete the testing. The cost estimate for 21 samples is \$5,750.

HEADWORKS PARSHALL FLUME & RELATED IMPROVEMENTS

The Otak plans for Flume Improvement are approved by DEQ. There is a proposal for Shannon and Wilson to provide geotechnical engineering support to this project on the 3-18-13 agenda. The City will work with Otak

to develop an Invitation to Bid process to fast track the selection of a general contractor for this project.

OTHER PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITY

MASTER CAPITAL PLAN

Both the Parks Committee and the Public Works Committee have provided comments to Dan Heffernan and Tom Wood and Brad Curtis to allow the Master Capital Plan to be completed and brought forward to City Council. The draft document will be brought forward to Council in April 2013. Both Parks Committee and Public Works committee have reviewed and with a few changes forwarded the document to City Council.

SDC FEE SCHEDULE

The Public Works Committee was informed that the City Administrator is developing a scope of work to bring forward to the PWC in April or May to secure the services of Dan Heffernan Company et al to complete the SDC fee schedule update. This update grows out of the Master Capital Plan project.

WATER RATE UPDATE

As promised last year, Oregon Association of Water Utilities is reviewing our revenue

and expenses for the first two quarters of the fiscal year to provide guidance to the City Council on how to manage adjustments to the water utility rate in the future. I hope to have that information to City Council soon. To modify the impact of any increase, City intends to temper the increase by refinancing one USDA water bond this year.

SEWER RATE STUDIES

FCS Group is working on a preliminary sewer rate study document to share with the Public Works Committee. They may be invited to the 3-26-13 PWC for a discussion. I have provided the basic assumptions for them to use in developing their model and options. The Committee can comment on how we step into the new rate that allows for a payment of the new principle and interest and the establishment of higher loan reserves in calendar year 2015 as an increase in the sewer rates over the next twenty-one

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Vernonia City Council Meetings

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7 PM:

Monday, April 1
Monday, April 15

Dates and times subject to change due to conflicts of schedules

City Information and Updates Available by Email

Citizens who wish to receive meeting information and updates can request to be placed on an email list at City Hall. Please contact Joann Glass at joann@vernonia-or.gov and asked to be placed on the "Citizen Notification List."

NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

On April 2, 2013 a public meeting of the Budget Committee of the City of Vernonia, Columbia County, State of Oregon, will be held to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2013 to June 2014, at the Vernonia Learning Center, 939 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Any person may appear at this meeting and discuss the proposed

programs with the Budget Committee. The meeting for public comment will be held on: **April 2, 2013 at 6:00 PM at the Vernonia Learning Center, 939 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.**

A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after March 20, 2013 at City Hall, 1001 Bridge Street between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday-Friday.

Vernonia Dental



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