

Vernonia City News...

At the November 18, 2013 City Council Meeting:

Council Discusses Health Clinic Site Development Plan- Council has received an approval from the Planning Commission for the Site Development Permit for the construction of the new Vernonia Health Clinic at Cougar and Weed Streets. The Permit was approved based on a series of conditions being met.

Council and the Health Board are continuing to work on the legal arrangements which will allow the Health Board to use the property. Council agreed by consensus to have Mayor Josette Mitchell send a letter to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, which originally gave the City use of the property, to get approval to lease the property to the Health Board.

Erika Paleck, representing the Health Board also asked about the timeline for environmental reviews for the site and was told that field testing on the entire site will take place during the week of November 25.

Council Approves Airport Park/Airport Host Agreement- Based on recommendations from the Parks and Airport Committees, Council approved a revised Airport Park/Airport Host Agreement.

Council Approves Contract for Wastewater Engineering- Council approved a contract with Tetra Tech Engineering and Architecture Services to provide services for construction administration for the completion of the Wastewater Improvement Project. The contract is for an amount not to exceed \$398,816. Council later Passed Resolution 19-13 which allows for the continuation of Engineering Services with Tetra Tech.

Generator Project Completed at City Hall- Police Chief Mike Conner informed Council that the project to wire an emergency generator at City Hall has been

completed. In the event of a power outage, City Hall now has the ability to use phone lines, some lights and some computers.

Conner Completes Chief Requirements- Council was informed that according to DPSST, Police Chief Mike Conner has met all training and management requirements for the position of Police Chief and will be issued a certification in early 2014.

Executive Session- Council entered into Executive Session under ORS 192.660(2)(i) *Performance Evaluations of the Public Officers and Employees*. Upon returning to Open Session, Council asked City Administrator Bill Haack if he would like to have his Performance Review on December 2, 2103 in an open or closed session. Haack requested a closed session.

City Administrator Report

By Bill Haack

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT PROJECT

WWTP COST ESTIMATE

The Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) facility improvements project cost estimate is adjusted up to \$6.3 million. This includes the completed Flume Improvement Project with final costs at about \$300,000 and the construction and design costs. The Biosolids Removal contract is not let at this time. If completed under a contract now under review it could be completed by end of the calendar year at a cost of about \$800,000. The Council asked for additional information on the options that they will review on 11-20-13. The City completed a small contract to create a staging area for the biosolids removal (costing about \$21,000) to locate dewatering centrifuges, pumps, conveyor belt, scale, generator and a job shack for the planned removal project. The estimate for the construction of the pipe gallery, dike elevation and additional constructed improvements as well as overall project and construction management was estimated at \$4.52 million in August 2012. Council asked that this value be adjusted by two CPI cycles to \$4.80 million. When a contract is let for construction management the engineer of record will revise the estimate prior to bidding.

WWTP ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

We received word from DEQ that the EPA review of the environmental assessment is their first priority. I am very hopeful that the EA will be approved in December 2013 without significant additional requirements.

If there are additional requirements, there will be new costs to update the plans to meet those requirements and a new DEQ review requirement.

WWTP TREATMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The City Council will review a proposal at their November 18 meeting from Tetra Tech to continue serving as the design and construction engineer through the process to complete construction, initiate operations and set in motion securing a new DEQ permit. The flow chart that is attached to the proposal shows final design and updates to documents as step one, oversight of the bid process as step two, and construction of the improvements as step three. There is a post construction project that includes as-built drawings and project records. The proposed schedule shows completion of construction in 2014. Tetra Tech feels that this schedule is achievable.

USDA FINANCING

City staff will meet with USDA in November 2013, to restart the process of securing funding through their program.

OTHER PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITY

SEASONAL STORMWATER PROJECTS

The City of Vernonia Public Works Department will cut a ditch into the right of way on south edge of G Street to capture surface runoff that has contributed to damage of East Avenue, F Street, and private driveways and improvements located on East Avenue. It is estimated that this will take two staff approximately one day to complete. The Public Works Department will install a catch

basin and do minor roadwork at 2nd Avenue and Bridge Street to capture surface water. Public Works Department completed general ditch work on O-A and Corey Hill this past month. Stormwater management projects are funded from the Street Fund.

UTILITY BILLING AUDIT

After reviewing the billing dataset for the four dual water meters it was learned that earlier this year three of the meters were reset incorrectly causing a significant undercharge to three accounts. I have asked the Finance Administrator to provide me with an accounting of this error and we will contact the three customers to establish a repayment plan. In a discussion with the City Attorney, we reviewed Section 9 of Ord. 871 which permits estimated meter readings when actual are not available and permits adjustments when actual readings are known. This section also permits charges for each meter to be made from one reading to the next based on the established billing method. This permits establishment of a proper billing method and charge accordingly. A payment plan will be developed for this undercharged amount outside of the monthly billing cycle with no late charges.

CUSTOMER LEAK BILLING ADJUSTMENT POLICY

Last month I provided the Public Works Committee with a sample water leak policy borrowed from the City of Portland for their review. The underlying rationale for this is to provide incentives to customers to fix leaks in a timely manner. I am hoping to present this to Council soon.

WATER RATE ADJUSTMENT

There is a memorandum from the Oregon Association of Water Utilities that recommends an adjustment for the current fiscal year and an estimate for an adjustment in FY 2014-2015. The two year adjustment is a little under 3% per year of the base rate only. I will present options to the Public Works Committee this month.

SEWER RATE ADJUSTMENT

The City will contact FCS Group to request their assistance to author an Ordinance to modify the sewer rate. The sewer rate will be stepped into over the current fiscal year and the next two fiscal years. The third year may be a downward adjustment based on the prospect of refinancing debt using USDA resources.

EPA BROWNFIELD GRANT

I will be contacting EPA this month to negotiate a modification in the PBS contract increasing their contract by about \$20,000. The increases in their cost are the result of more costly Phase Two work plans required by DEQ and the EPA requirement that all Phase Twos consultancy also have a State Historic Preservation Office Section 106 Consultancy and a Threatened and Endangered Species Act consultancy completed. This modification will reduce the funding for City Staff and Other. The project will be completed early in 2014 so this reduction will not impact the city's management of this project. The Grant oversight was originally estimated at 24 months; it will likely be completed in 15 months. At this time the City will likely pursue a second EPA Brownfield Assessment grant in the cycle that opens in December 2013.

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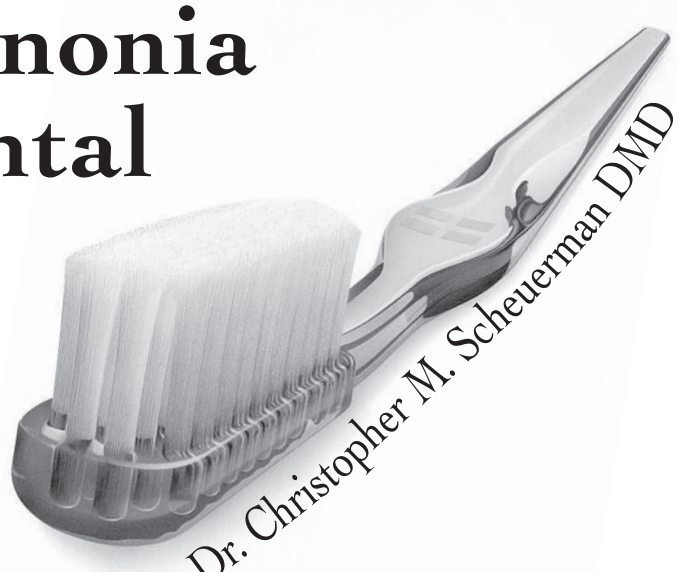
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