

Vernonia City News...

At the January 20, 2015 City Council Meeting:

Council Approves Budget Calendar, Appoints Budget Officer-Council approved the Budget Calendar presented by Finance Director Angie Handegard. The first Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for April 28, with additional meetings scheduled for May 5, 12, and 19. The Council also appointed City Administrator Gian Paolo Mammone as the Budget Officer. Mayor Josette Mitchell appointed former City Councilor Bruce McNair to serve as a citizen member of the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee is still looking for additional citizens to serve.

Council Agrees to Forgive Part of Water Bill-City Administrator Mammone presented Council with a report on the water leak issue that was brought before Council by resident Victoria McAdams at the January 5, 2015 City Council meeting. Mammone reported that after two months of increasingly high water usage, City staff visited the property, saw no indication of a leak and replaced the water meter at McAdams' rental where she lives. The following month the reading still showed an unusual increase in usage (82,000) gallons. In December City staff met with McAdams and the landlord and was informed there was a leak in a toilet, which is the responsibility of the owner/renter. Mammone told Council that City policy is clear, a leak on private property is not the responsibility of the City. The outstanding balance still due for usage during the time of the issue (not including the monthly base rate and loans payments) totals \$485.26. Council agreed to forgive half the usage fees and instructed city staff to send a bill for the balance to both McAdams and the landlord so they can work out payment arrangements. Mayor Mitchell said McAdams will not be subject to any shutoff procedure if the balance of payment is late.

Council Approves Senior Center Lease-Council authorized the City Administrator to sign a revised lease agreement between the City and the Senior Center for use of the Vernonia Community Learning Center (VCLC) as a Thrift Store. The proposed lease includes the VCLC building, the courtyard attached to the building and the parking area in back of the building. Rent is \$12 per year and the tenant would pay \$200 for

the cost of administrating, drafting and executing the lease. The tenant will sub-lease one office space to the Vernonia Friends of the Library. During the discussion of the lease terms several items were brought forward by Jim Tierney of Community Action Team, who is assisting the Senior Center with the negotiation. Questions included: the length of the lease - either two or three years, permitted uses, and responsibility for maintenance and repairs. City legal counsel was involved in part of the discussion by phone and was asked to prepare a revised version of the lease. Council gave the City Administrator authorization to sign the lease with revisions, if approved by the Senior Center. The lease was later signed.

Council Approves Purchase of Senior Center Property-Council adopted Resolution 01-15, approving and authorizing the signing of the purchase and the sale agreement for the Senior Center property at 446 Bridge Street, and recommending the use of \$200,402.96 of HMGP funds. The buyout of the Senior Center is one of the final property purchases related to the 2007 flood.

Council Approves Spencer Park IGA-Council authorized the City Administrator to sign the revised IGA between the City and the School District finalizing the transfer and acceptance of the replacement park and the release of escrow funds being held.

Council Approves Spencer Park Restroom Engineering-Council authorized the use of Oregon Local Government Grant funds for architectural drawings, engineering and construction of a new restroom facility at the new Spencer Park. The grant funding was received by the City in 2007. City staff will work with Tetra Tech, the City's engineering firm, for design and engineered plans and will prepare an RFP for construction in the spring. The Parks Committee is also moving forward with a plan to have a local high school student, Quentin Skanes, design plans for a picnic shelter at Spencer Park, utilizing recovered lumber already purchased by the City from the Washington Grade School deconstruction. The City intends to use volunteer local labor to construct the shelter this summer.

Council Approves Library Computer Purchases and Upgrades-Council approved the purchase of two new comput-

ers and the repair and upgrade of software for four computers at the Vernonia Library. Total cost is \$4,480.

Council Recommends OLCC Licenses Renewals-Council took no action to deny any applications for OLCC license renewals, therefore approving them. Vernonia Police Chief Mike Conner had no issues with any of the applicants. Applicants were: All In Pub & Eatery, Blue House Cafe, Bridge Street Mini Mart, Cedar Side Inn, La Cabana Mexican Restaurant, New Hong Kong Restaurant, R & S Market, and The Black Iron Grill & Bear Creek Pub.

Topics From the Floor-Sally Harrison brought several items to the Council. Harrison suggested that Council consider naming Kala Cota the Poet Laureate of Vernonia. Harrison also suggested the City consider seeding vacant lots around town with wildflowers as a way to reduce maintenance and upkeep. Harrison also volunteered to lock and unlock the cemetery gate at night to reduce damage that has been occurring to grass at corners of the road in the cemetery. Harrison was informed that the City has identified Waste Management trucks as being responsible for the damage at the cemetery.

Nathan Owen introduced himself to Council as the newly elected President of the Ridge Riders Equestrian Group, along with Courtney Tice, the new Vice President. Owen said he is looking forward to working with Council on any issues they may have. After meeting in Executive Session later in the meeting, Council returned to Open Session and announced that two Council members would be scheduling a meeting with representatives of the Ridge Riders to discuss current legal issues and a possible settlement to the disagreement between the two parties.

Steve Calhoun expressed concern about the potential Oregon LNG Pipeline which would cross Rock Creek four miles above the City water source intake. Calhoun encouraged the City to research the project and make sure the City water is protected.

Scott Laird updated Council on the Vernonia Community Solutions project which has been a collaboration with the City, the Vernonia School District and the Vernonia Area Chamber of Commerce to produce a publication twice a year to promote the Vernonia community. Laird asked the Council to consider

becoming more involved in the project. Scott Laird, Chair of the Vernonia Parks Committee, asked Council for permission to begin discussions with the Vernonia Boosters Club about participating in maintenance and upgrades at the new Spencer Park. Laird said the Parks Committee would return to Council with any plans. Council gave approval to begin discussions.

Brett Costley encouraged the Council to find a solution to the computer issues at the Vernonia Library.

At the February 2, 2015 City Council Meeting:

Mayor Thanks Glass for Service-Mayor Josette Mitchell thanked City Recorder Joann Glass for her ten years of service to the City of Vernonia. Glass is retiring in February and this was her last City Council meeting.

Council Approves Release of Escrow Funds for School District-Council authorized the City Administrator to write and sign a letter to Ticor Title Company to release the outstanding balance of escrow funds to the Vernonia School District. The funds, \$504,128, were held to ensure completion of the demolition of the old school buildings and construction of the new replacement park.

Council Approves Water Service Size and Rate Correction-Council received a update report from Ben Fousek explaining the Water Service and Billing Project, which has also been called "water meter ground truthing." Using GIS technology city staff and volunteers mapped every water meter in the City system. As part of the project staff identified thirteen accounts that were being billed for the wrong meter size since the City switched billing systems in the spring of 2014. Eleven accounts have been under billed and two accounts have been over billed. Council directed staff to refund the accounts that had been over billed and take no action on the accounts that had been under charged.

Council Amends Traffic and Pedestrian Ordinance-Council approved Resolution 900, amending Resolution 745, sections 27 and 31, which controls vehicle and pedestrian traffic. The amendment shortens the section of Bridge Street where people cannot ride on the sidewalks from

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Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7 PM:
Tuesday, February 17, 2015
Monday, March 2, 2015

City Closures are scheduled for:
Monday, February 16, 2015
Presidents' Day

Dates and times subject to change due to conflicts of schedules



Terry's Gym



JOIN THE TEAM!

503-901-1705
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