

Vernonia City News...

At the April 6, 2015 City Council Meeting:

Parrow Sworn in as Mayor - Randy Parrow took the Oath of Office and was sworn in as the Mayor of Vernonia. Parrow, a former City Councilor, took over the position when former Mayor Josette Mitchell resigned in order to accept the position of City Recorder/Assistant to the City Administrator.

Council Approves Daily City Hall Closure for Lunch - Council approved a proposal from staff to close City Hall from 12:30 to 1:30 PM beginning May 4, 2015, so staff can take a scheduled lunch break. City Hall will also now be open to the public for business beginning at 8:00 AM; the office was previously not open until 9:00 AM.

Council Approves City Car - Council approved the conversion of an old Police vehicle that is no longer in service and has been for sale, to use as a city vehicle. The vehicle would be used by the City Administrator as needed for city business, by the Police Department for Code Enforcement duties, by the City Flood Plain Manager and for travel by staff outside the city. Cost to convert the vehicle and operate it for a year was estimated by staff to be \$1,304. Cost to reimburse employees for use of their own vehicles for city business was estimated to be \$2,488.

Council Approves Library Notification Plan - Council approved a plan

presented by Library Director Shannon Romtvedt to publicize the new Computer and Internet Use Policy at the Library. Council approved the new policy at the March 16, 2015 meeting, which requires minors to have a signed "opt out of internet use" form as opposed to them being required to have signed permission for use. The plan to publicize the changes include: informing new patrons of the Library, posting it on the City Facebook page, publish a notice in *Vernonia's Voice*, communicate the policy change with the School District through School Library staff, and continuing to inform patrons with children of the policy change.

Council Approves Participation Protocol - Based on a request from the Public Works Committee, Council approved a protocol allowing Public Works Committee representatives to participate in the Waste Water Treatment Upgrade Project by visiting the project site and participating in Weekly Project Meetings.

Council Discusses Marijuana Dispensaries - Council held a lengthy discussion about medical marijuana dispensaries and recreational marijuana retail establishments. A year ago Council placed a one year moratorium on Medical Marijuana dispensaries; it expires May 1 and Council needed to discuss how to move forward when recreational use of marijuana becomes legal on July 1, 2015. The Council asked staff to

begin the process of creating maps that would show where in the commercial zone a recreational retail business could go if they put in place different types of restrictions. Council decided to do nothing on the medical marijuana moratorium they have in place and believe they are protected under the Federal rules that classify marijuana as a controlled substance. The City already has written into their business license ordinance a rule which prohibits activities in violation of federal law.

City Administrator Presents Streetscape Options for Downtown - City Administrator Gian Paolo Mammone made a presentation to Council and the audience about possible changes to the streetscape of the downtown corridor. Council had previously asked Mammone to research options after business owners complained about the trees along Bridge Street blocking business signage and damaging sidewalks. Mammone presented several options. The general agreement was that the trees need to be removed and replaced with trees in containers. Council asked Mammone to return at the May 5, 2015 meeting with a more detailed plan that includes a parking plan and cost analysis for the project, including relaying all the pavers along the streetscape.

Council Requests Information on LNG Projects - At the request of Councilor Kim Tierney, Council directed staff

to invite a member of Columbia Riverkeepers and a Columbia County Commissioner to the April 20 City Council meeting to discuss the proposed Oregon LNG and Oregon Pipeline projects.

Mayor Appoints Cole to Planning Commission - Mayor Randy Parrow, with consent from the Council and a recommendation from the Planning Commission, appointed Brian Cole to the Planning Commission.

Council Hears Recommendation from Planning Commission - Council heard a recommendation from the Planning Commission, urging the City Administrator to expedite the hiring of a new City Planner. The previous Planner, Carole Connell, resigned but has agreed to extend her contract until June. When asked, City Administrator Gian Paolo Mammone said he is working on the issue. Council took no additional action.

Topics From the Floor - Jeff Harrison told Council that he discovered a major water leak at his residence when his meter was last read. Harrison said he fixed the leak immediately and was asking Council to forgive the excess water use. Council referred the issue to staff to be handled as they have with other similar issues.

Jack Harvey, President of the Senior Center Board, raised concerns about electrical boxes in the sidewalk in front of the new Senior Center, and said they posed a safety risk. Council asked staff to look into the issue.

City Department Updates: March 30 - April 10, 2015

Administration / Utility Billing

- Ordinance No. 898 that changed the City's policy on Past Due Utility Accounts was passed by City Council on December 15th, 2014. The following were the outstanding balances as of January 2015: 90 days: \$2,108.36, 60 days: \$8,306.14, 30 days: \$27,715.92
- As of April 2015 the outstanding balances are as follows: 90 days: \$ 0.00, 60 days: \$313.77, 30 days: \$1,363.36
- Reminder: Shut off letters will be mailed and Late Fees will be applied on 4/17/2015. Shut offs will be on 4/27/2015
- Issued 3 electrical permits.
- Issued 2 building permits for 2 new homes.

Police Department - VPD

- Vernonia Homicide Investigation: The Vernonia Police Department has received several questions regarding the shooting incident that occurred on Riverside Drive on March 26th, 2015. At this time, only very basic details are available for public release. These types of investigations take an extraordinary amount of time and are very tasking on Law Enforcement personnel. The Vernonia Police Department will provide updates when more information comes available. However, in order to protect the integrity of the investigation we will only release very basic details.
- March 11th, 2015 - March 31st, 2015 - The

- total number of calls for service and Officer Initiated activity was 150.
- Statistics: The total number of calls for service and officer initiated activity in March 2015 was 230.
- April 1st, 2015 - April 8th, 2015 - The total number of Calls for Service and Officer Initiated activity was 74.
- Nuisance Violations: VPD is working on 21 properties that have violations. Details of the violations along with an area map will be provided during the next regular council meeting.

Finance

- An ad for Park Host opening at Anderson Park was posted on the City website and on two sites recommended to us by State Parks in order to find a replacement host. The current hosts have agreed to remain at the park until June. The posting closes on May 15th.
- Beginning April 6th, James McMahon will be stepping into a new role as Parks Superintendent. He will be in charge of overseeing all of the City's parks. He will be a great asset to the City and we would like to congratulate him on his new position.
- Finance Director met with City Administrator to go over the

- different funds that make up the City's budget and to go over some history of the City budget in order to begin preparing the budget message. Final budget preparations continued.
- Finance Director created supplemental budget (FY 14-15) for the Parks Department to be presented to Council at the next meeting. The supplemental budget will move funds from contingency into salaries and appropriate funds between some other line items in order to cover costs associated with the new Parks Superintendent position until June 30, 2015 and the recent repairs to the hole in the dike at Vernonia Lake. The total Park budget will not change or increase, we are simply appropriating within the existing line items.
- Finance Director created a resolution to authorize the use of DEQ funds for interim financing of the Waste Water Treatment Plant Project. This will also be presented to Council at the next meeting. This is a checklist item required by DEQ when using their funds. The project should be out to bid very soon.

Public Works

- Public Works installed two new water services this week. They are both located on Rose Hedge Ct. We currently have

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Police Blotter April 1-13, 2015

REPORT TAKEN

- April 1, 2015 Report of Burglary in the 700 Block of Spencer Ave.

Vernonia Police Department responds to calls that do not always end in Arrest, Report, or Citation.
4/1/2015 through 4/14/2015 VPD had a 109 calls for service.

Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7 PM:
Monday, April 20, 2015
Monday, May 4, 2015

City Closures are scheduled for:
Monday, May 25, 2015
Memorial Day

Dates and times subject to change due to conflicts of schedules



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