

Vernonia City News...

At the February 16, 2016 City Council Meeting:

Council Approves Adjustment in Sewer Rates – Council gave a consensus approval for new sewer rates, based on a report from FCS Group and a recommendation from the Public Works Committee. A public hearing will be held on March 7, 2016 before Council votes on a final approval. (See full story on front page.)

Council Discusses Draft Marijuana Ordinance – Council discussed a draft ordinance that would provide regulations for the location and operation of marijuana facilities in city limits. Council agreed on most of the ordinance, but could not agree on hours of operation restrictions; two of the Council wanted to approve hours of operation from 8 am to 10 pm and two of the Council questioned why this commercial business should be restricted any more than others in the City and thought they should allow hours of operation that are the same as bar hours, from 7 am to 2:30 am. Mayor Randy Parrow was not in attendance at the meeting. The Ordinance will be brought back to the next Council meeting for further discussion.

Council Approves Sports Field Fees

Based on a recommendation from the Parks Committee, the Council gave consensus approval to changes in fees for exclusive use of sports fields within the City Park System. Fees that were changed include: the Season Rate for Youth Sports teams changed to \$150 per sport; Tournaments for Youth Sports changed to \$150/ up to two days; Tournaments for all other groups changed to \$150/day; exclusive use of Spencer Park for all other groups changed to \$100 for first four hours, \$50 for each additional four hours. Council approved the suggestion that the City retain the right to hang sponsorship signs and collect fees for field and facility improvements. Final approval will be part of a change to the Master Fee Schedule to be voted on at a future meeting.

Council Reduces Fees for Library – Following a report from Library Director Shannon Romtvedt, Council approved the reduction of fees to \$25 per year per family for nonresident patrons of the library. Romtvedt told the Council residents seeking a library account pay for membership through their city property taxes. Nonresidents pay \$40 per year, which Romtvedt says can be a hardship for some potential members. By lowering the rate Romtvedt says she hopes to make the library more

accessible, increase membership and serve more people.

Council Rejects Benefit for Nonresident Employees – Council rejected a proposal from City Administrator Josette Mitchell to provide the benefit of a yearly park pass and library membership to employees of the City who live outside City limits. Council members stated that it would be unfair to other employees.

Council Approves Budget Calendar – Council approved the proposed Budget Calendar for the 2016-17 budget process. All budget meetings will be held starting at 6:30 pm at the Cabin in Vernonia. The first meeting will take place on April 12 where staff will present the proposed budget and a chair and vice chair will be elected. On April 19, the Budget Committee will hear public comment. Additional meetings are scheduled for April 26, May 3, May 10, May 17, June 7 and June 14, with the adoption of the budget scheduled for June 20. Council also appointed City Administrator Josette Mitchell as the Budget Officer.

Council Approves Sale and Purchase of Vehicles – Council approved the sale of a Ford Expedition previously declared surplus and authorized the purchase of

a used 2-wheel drive Chevy pickup for sale locally for \$1,950 to be used by the Public Works Department and the Police Department.

Council Hears “Keep It Local” Presentation – Council heard a presentation from Natasha Pervey for the “Keep It Local Columbia County” campaign. Pervey is working with local businesses in the county to create an online listing of all businesses and said she will be working in Vernonia in the near future.

Topics From the Floor – Mike Buffum questioned several items in the proposed marijuana ordinance including rules that regulated public view and odor.

Council President Kim Tierney read comments by Brett Costley into the record; Costley questioned why marijuana businesses would be more restricted than any other business in a Commercial zone particularly in regards to hours of operation and signage.

Readers Lend Their Voices...

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Multnomah County receives to house federal prisoners and what we charge has not increased as has Multnomah County's, despite inflation. This would be funny if it weren't so pathetic – the Commissioners don't know if they make money or lose money on the federal prisoners. They have had three years since the last ballot measure to find out but they can't do the math.

And then the hospital, that never received approval from the State of Oregon – but the Hospital Board bought and improved the property on Millard Road anyway. And the State did not approve it. We all received a pittance in the form of a credit on our property taxes. The Commissioners, including Commissioner Hyde, have given the property to the City of St. Helens rather than selling it and refunding tax payers.

But \$8 million dollars has gone missing from the hospital debacle. If anyone knows where it is, nobody's telling. Poof!

Commissioner Hyde has been in office for nearly twenty years. During this time, Columbia County has lost nearly 20% of our non-farm related jobs and our county indebtedness has risen to over \$72 million.

I bet Alex Tardif wouldn't have sided with the Commissioners on these debacles that have cost tax payers millions – because he could have done the MATH! Let's elect someone who is qualified to handle our money. This is the most important skill a Commissioner can have.

Cathy Pitkin
Warren, OR

times. I sat in the 10th row. I knew I needed GOD in my life and the Force was GOD. I accepted Jesus as my savior on February 10, 1980.

On December 29, 2015 I took my daughter to see Star Wars. Coming home from 185th I heard a clinking sound. I didn't pay attention to it until Hwy 47.

The truck pulled to the right and I thought this was weird. Turning left the truck pulled to the right worse.

I thought maybe I was getting a flat tire. I kept going. At the first curves I had a vision; the right front tire came off and we rolled down the hill. I said, “Sarah, we need to pray and call on the Force of GOD to get us to safety.” We prayed and held hands, kept praying as my brakes kept going in and out. We tried to use my cell but there was no signal and it was getting dark. We kept praying and calling on GOD's Force to save us. “I am getting scared GOD, send your HOLY SPIRIT to help us. Please get us to Aaron's garage.” We were 10 miles away and driving 20 miles per hour.

We pull in and I have no brakes. I pray to the force of GOD to please make them work one more time. He did and we stopped.

The mechanics came out bug eyed! My front tire was sideways. They came over and wiggled it. They could not believe I drove from 185th with this broken tire. They told me later the only thing holding that tire on was the broken brakes. MIRACLE!

The FORCE was with us. THE FORCE IS GOD! PRAISE GOD! And thank you for this miracle.

Gail Law
Vernonia

To the Editor,
In 1979 I saw Star Wars 10

Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm:
Monday, March 7, 2016
March 14, 2016 - Worksession
Monday, March 21, 2016

City Closures are scheduled for:
Monday, May 30, 2016
Memorial Day

Dates and times subject to change due to conflicts of schedules

Police Blotter February 1 - 15, 2016

REPORTS TAKEN

- February 3, 2016 Arrest on a Warrant near Vernonia Lake
- February 3, 2016 Arrest for Theft III in the 700 block of Jefferson Ave.
- February 4, 2016 Report of Theft II in the 1200 block of Umatilla St.
- February 5, 2016 Report of Criminal Mischief III in the 200 block of Bridge St.
- February 6, 2016 Report of Failure to Perform Duties of a Driver on Riverside Dr. with property damage.
- February 7, 2016 Arrest on a Warrant near State St.
- February 11, 2016 Failure to Perform Duties of a Driver with property damage on State St.

Vernonia Police Department responds to calls that do not always end in Arrest, Report, or Citation. 02/01/2016 through 02/15/2016 VPD had 97 calls for service

The American Legion Post 119 would like to thank all of those who helped with the fund raiser for our Vets in our little town. The winning ticket for the gun was #6519848, Harold Coof of Vernonia. Congratulations Harold! We need more members for the American Legion, come down to the next meeting; they are always held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm.



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