

Vernonia City News...

At the March 6, 2017 City Council Meeting:

Police Chief Makes Two Presentations

– Vernonia Police Chief Mike Conner presented Officer Cody Pesio with the Life Saving Award for his heroic actions in saving a female resident during a house fire in January. Conner also promoted Officer Shawn Carnahan to Patrol Sergeant. (See full story on front page.)

Council Discussed Vendor Request, Schedules Workshop

– Council heard a request from David Sterner to place a food cart at the parking lot across from Spencer Field on Bridge Street. Sterner has been working with the City for several months to try to receive approval for his new business. Sterner told the Council his cart would be a moveable trailer that would be at the location from April until October. Council discussed the need for a lease agreement and the possibility of developing a different site for vendors at the corner of Bridge Street and Grant Avenue, the site of the former health clinic, but noted the high cost to develop the site, including the installation of electric power. Sterner said the site at Grant Avenue would be his preferred location and Council scheduled a workshop for March 13 to discuss their options and respond to Sterner as quickly as possible.

Council Approves Water Leak Forgiveness Request

– Council heard a request from Steven Assad for some help with a large water bill following a leak that went undetected for almost a month. Assad is the new owner of Riverside Meadows RV Park and told the Council he is trying to provide a low income housing option for the community. Assad said one of his tenants was away for the winter when a leak of over 500,000 gallons of water occurred.

Council offered to reduce Assad's bill by \$1,107.78 and provide a payment plan for the balance.

Romtvedt Provides Library Update

– Library Director Shannon Romtvedt presented Council with an updated Behavior Policy that she created with help from staff and the Library Board. Romtvedt told the Council the policy was developed after reviewing policies from other libraries, including Hillsboro, St. Helens and Banks. The two-page policy provides guidelines for acceptable behavior and general conduct of patrons of the Library and notes that individuals may be trespassed from the Library if they willfully violate the rules and do not respond to staff warnings or requests.

Romtvedt also provided the Council with the results of a community survey about the Library. The survey was available from December 4 through January 5 and had 135 responses. The stated purpose was to find out what services patrons value, give patrons an opportunity to comment on hours and give general feedback, and help guide future projects. While Romtvedt said there was nothing that was especially unexpected in the results she did learn some interesting information. One thing Romtvedt noted was that almost 90% of respondents considered the Library either "very important" or "important." She also noted that 21% of respondents did not have a library membership. She also discussed the positive impact that the reduction in the fee, implemented last year for members who live outside the City limits, has had in making the Library

more accessible; the fee was reduced from \$35 to \$20 and scholarships are offered through the Friends of the Library.

Mayor Appoints Bryson to Library Board – Mayor Mario Leonetti, with a recommendation from the Library Board and approval from the rest of the Council, appointed Veronica Bryson to the Library Board.

Council Approves Budget Calendar

– The Council appointed City Administrator Josette Mitchell as the Budget Officer and approved the Budget Calendar presented by Finance Director Angie Handegard. The calendar calls for the first Budget Committee meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 11, with additional meetings as needed every week on Tuesdays. Meetings are scheduled for 6:30 at the Cabin in Vernonia (Scout Cabin). There are two open positions on the Budget Committee for anyone who would like to be involved in the process.

City Administrator Report – City Administrator Josette Mitchell told the Council there was a meeting and walk

through of the Wastewater Treatment project. Mitchell said the City did not sign off on substantial completion and instead signed Change Order #11 which gives the contractor until May 15, 2017 to finish all work on the project.

Mitchell said she met with the Lowrance family and with a representative from Columbia Geotechnical to discuss their State Emergency Repair Permit to stabilize their stream bank on Bear Creek. Mitchell said the Lowrances will be allowed to do more permanent work after water flows decrease. She also said the Department of State Lands is aware of a culvert that was placed in Bear Creek and the subsequent problems that have occurred following the installation of that culvert.

Mitchell said she talked with Robert Bradley from ODFW who is heading up the installation of a new pump at Vernonia Lake. Bradley said the pump should be installed in April and operational by May 15.

Affordable Homeownership Opportunity Available in St. Helens

Columbia County Habitat for Humanity (CCHFH) is opening up the application process to a new group of potential homeowners. The application process will kick off with two application information meetings on Tuesday, March 21 at 6:30 pm and March 25 at 10:00 am, both at Warren Community Fellowship.

"Becoming a partner family is a huge commitment. Among other requirements, families have to have a stable income to be able to make an affordable mortgage payment. That's why we make the information meeting a required part of the application," states Jennifer

Anderson Executive Director, CCHFH.

The new Habitat for Humanity house slated to be built will be located in St. Helens on North 12th Street. Any low income family who has lived in Columbia County for at least one year is eligible to apply. The program requires accepted homeowners to put 300 hours of sweat equity into the construction of their home as well as attend homeowner education.

"The process is designed to empower families to make a better life for themselves. It is amazing to see the transformation over time that a stable home can make," says Anderson.

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NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the City of Vernonia, Columbia County, State of Oregon, to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, will be held at the Cabin in Vernonia 901 Park Drive, Vernonia OR 97064. The meeting will take place on April 11th, 2017 at 6:30pm

The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message, the Budget Document and to establish the agenda for future meetings. No deliberation will take place at this meeting.

An additional, separate meeting of the Budget Committee will be held to take public comment. Any person may appear at that meeting to discuss proposed programs with the Budget Committee.

The meeting for public comment will be on:

Date: April 18th, 2017 Time: 6:30 pm Location: Cabin in Vernonia

A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after April 11th, 2017 at City Hall

1001 Bridge St, between the hours of 9am - 5pm Monday - Friday

Reserve Police Officer Job Announcement

The Vernonia Police Department has openings for Reserve Police Officers. Interested citizens can obtain an application and complete job description in person at the Vernonia Police Department. Minimum qualifications include, but not limited to: must have a high school diploma or GED; must be at least 21 years of age and be a U.S. Citizen; have a valid Oregon driver's license; be able to pass a criminal background investigation; and pass medical and psychological evaluations. Questions regarding the position should be directed to Chief Michael Conner (503) 429-7335 ext. 110.

Budget Committee Positions Available

The City of Vernonia currently has two positions open on the Budget Committee. The committee is made up of the City Council and five community members. This is your chance to be a part of the process! If you are interested please contact City Hall for an application.

Police Blotter • March 1-13, 2017

REPORTS TAKEN/ARRESTS

- March 6, 2017 Report of Criminal Mischief near North Street

CITATIONS/OTHER

- March 3, 2017 Cited for Violation of the Posted Speed 52 mph in a 35 mph near N Mist Dr.
- March 4, 2017 Cited for Violation of the Posted Speed 53 mph in a 35 mph near N Mist Dr.

- March 7, 2017 Cited for No Seatbelt and Failure to Provide Insurance or Registration near Bridge St.
- March 11, 2017 Cited for Violation of the Posted Speed 74 mph in a 55 mph near Nehalem HWY South
- March 12, 2017 Cited for Failure to Obey a Traffic Control Device near East Bridge St.

Vernonia Police Department responds to calls that do not always end in Arrest, Report, or Citation. 03/01/2017 through 03/13/2017 VPD had 139 calls for service.

The Vernonia Transfer Station is open on the 2nd and 4th Saturday from 8am-2pm

**March 25
April 8 & 22**

Dates and times are subject to change due to weather

Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm:

Monday, March 20, 2017
Monday, April 3, 2017

City Closures are scheduled for:
Monday, May 29, 2017
Memorial Day Holiday

Dates and times subject to change