

Vernonia City News...

At the March 5, 2018 City Council Meeting:

Council Appoints Members to Annual Rate Review Committee – Council voted to appoint members Bruce McNair and Jill Hult to the Rate Review Committee. The Committee meets annually to review water and sewer operations, utility expenses, upcoming projects, purchases, and loan payment requirements. They then formulate and recommend any needed changes to the water and sewer utility rates for the upcoming fiscal year. The Committee includes two members of the City Council, two members of the Public Works Committee, and three members of city staff. The Committee meets in March prior to the start of the City's budget process. (See story about City Utility Rate Review below and on front page.)

Council Receives Utility Rate Review Report – Council received a detailed written and verbal report on the 2018-19 Utility Rate Review from Planning Assistant Ben Fousek. The report suggests that the City may be able to reduce water and sewer utility rates next year and again in 2020. (See full story on front page.)

Council Approves Renewal of Planning Contract – Council authorized the signing of a planning services contract with MIG, Inc. and contractor Matt Straite. Straite has been providing professional planning services for the City for the last year as part of a contract with Carole Connell, who is retiring. Straite will now be working through MIG. City staff recommended approval of the contract and told the Council they have been very happy with Straite's work.

Council Approves Eagle Scout Project – Based on a recommendation from the Parks Committee, Council approved a proposal by Gabe Roberts for an Eagle Scout Project to install a bicycle repair station at Anderson Park adjacent to the Linear Trail. The bike repair station was a gift that the City of Vernonia received from Cycle Columbia County as a thank-you for hosting the start and end of their Columbia Century Challenge annual bike ride last summer.

Police Department Report – Police Chief Mike Conner told the Council that the City was going live on March 6 with a new CAD computer system which would allow regional public safety agencies to better communicate with each other.

Conner told the Council he would be making a hiring decision for a

new officer in the next few days.

Conner told Council he had obtained a used patrol vehicle at no cost and was getting it outfitted for duty.

Conner said he is looking into a program for "Fix – It" Tickets for drivers pulled over for correctable equipment violations, like a broken tail light. Instead of a citation and fine, the "ticket" will provide a coupon to help the driver purchase the part needed for the repair.

Conner told Council he is looking for grants to fund bringing two digital speed signs into the community.

City Administrator Report – City Administrator Josette Mitchell told the Council that she has received verbal approval from Mr. Rankin for an amendment to a water easement for the City water main that crosses his property and is just awaiting an approval from the family trust to sign the document.

Mitchell told the Council that she has sent a proposed storm water easement at the Lincoln School property to owner Bud Dow for review. The easement would allow the City to tie together storm water drainage on Corey Hill and alleviate water run-off problems for residents on 3rd Avenue.

Mitchell told Council she is continuing to work with the Parks Committee on a grant application to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) for upgrades at Spencer Park. A grant proposal will be presented to Council at their March 19 meeting for approval. Mitchell also told the Council she is working with Holly Vaughn and Michal Smith on a separate small grant application from OPRD for the Vernonia Dog Park on Ivy Street.

Topics From the Floor – Del Allen spoke to the Council about their decision to demolish the grandstand at Greenman Field. Allen read a newspaper article from when the grandstand was first being constructed, noting that it was built in part using salvage material from the O-A Mill. Allen asked the Council to allow an engineer, who would donate their time, to assess the structure to determine the feasibility of fixing it. He said there is historical value and suggested there were potential future uses by the community. "Once it's gone, it's gone forever," said Allen

John Brewer also spoke about the Council's decision to demo the grandstand. He said the condition is not as bad as everyone thinks. He said we need to know the actual costs to demo it and to repair it. He said it's one of the last parts of "old Vernonia" left. He said he thought there were lots of potential

uses and could be repaired with donated supplies and volunteer labor.

Brewer asked about another subject, wanting to know if adjacent property owners will be allowed to lease flood damaged properties. He also complained about the repaving of Grant Street several years ago, which is causing water to run onto his property.

Casey Mitchell told the Council that he agrees that the Greenman Field grandstands have historical and emotional meaning to the community. He said the Council and Parks Committee had discussed potential future uses and couldn't agree on enough uses that would warrant investing the funds necessary to repair it. He said the structure has received little maintenance over the last 60 years and that any future use would require dedicated volunteers. "What made that stadium great was the fact that the Mighty Loggers played in front of it," said Mitchell. He suggested that any time, money, and energy would be better spent in working to build a covered grandstand at the new stadium that the School District will build on their new campus.

Council took a few moments to discuss the reasoning for their decision to demolish the grandstand with the concerned citizens. Council member Bruce McNair said the City has already had an engineer inspect the structure. He said the decision to demo was not an easy one and that he has personal experience from his youth at the stadium, attending games and playing football at that field. He said as Council considered their options, they decided the costs to fix it were too much, estimated to be around \$100,000. McNair and City Administrator Mitchell said the City was in the pro-

cess of receiving bids for the demolition and could not discuss the amount until all bids were received, but said they were "substantially less" than the estimated cost for repairs. Mitchell added that, in addition to the truss that is visibly failing and needing to be completely replaced, there are issues with settling of the posts that support the roof structure, and the roof probably needs to be completely replaced. She said for insurance purposes, the City would need to completely repair any known issues. Mitchell said there is a possibility of burning the building by the Vernonia Fire District, which would save the City money.

Wendy Sears updated the Council on the SK8 Park project. She said the planning group met with Spohn Ranch, professional skate park developers from California who have family ties to Vernonia, and said owner Aaron Spohn had pledged to donate planning services to the group, valued at \$15,000. She said the group has received \$6,000 in donations, has pledges for \$15,000 more, and are applying for numerous grants. She said the group will be hosting a youth program during Jamboree with a skate board show and evening dance. She also provided safety and crime statistics for skate parks.

Council Meets in Executive Session, Takes No Action – Council met in Executive Session under ORS 192.660 (2) (f)(h): "(f) To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection; (h) To consult with council concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regards to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed." Upon returning to Open Session Council took no further action.

Police Blotter • March 1-12, 2018

Reports Taken/Arrests

- March 4, 2018 Arrest on detainer and Driving While Suspended near Pebble Creek
- March 7, 2018 Other Agency Assist
- March 7, 2018 Vehicle Impounded near Rose Avenue
- March 8, 2018 Arrest on a Warrant near Bridge Street

Citations/Other

- March 4, 2018 Cited for Failure to Obey a Traffic Control Device near Maple Street
- March 6, 2018 Cited for Failure to Carry

Proof of Insurance near Nehalem HWY South

- March 7, 2018 Cited for Violation of the Basic Rule 70/55 mph and Failure to Carry Proof of Insurance near Nehalem HWY South
- March 7, 2018 Cited for Nuisance Ordinance Violation near State Avenue

Currently, because of network changes, we cannot give total calls for service. We will have them for the end of month blotter. Thank you, Vernonia Police Department.

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10-6 Tue-Sat
12-4 Sun

**The Vernonia
Transfer Station
is scheduled to
be open on the
2nd and 4th Saturday
January - October
8:00 am - 2:00 pm**

**March 24
April 14 & 28**

*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 19, 2018
Monday, April 2, 2018

**City Closures
are scheduled for:**
Monday, May 28, 2018
Memorial Day Holiday

Dates and times subject to change