

Vernonia City News...

At the June 17, 2019 City Council Meeting:

Council Approves New Fee Schedule; Increases Cemetery Rates – After a lengthy and sometimes contentious discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 08-19, amending the Master Fee Schedule, which now takes effect July 1, 2019. The changes to the fee schedule included new city utility rates for water and sewer, which should provide about a \$20 decrease for most residential customers, and some minor changes to parks fees. The discussion mainly focused on increases to cemetery fees at the City owned Memorial Cemetery. Councilors Bruce McNair and J.R. Allen objected to an increase in the cost for a plot in the cemetery, which would raise the cost for an adult plot from \$1,100 to \$2,000, and the cost for a child under the age of 18 from \$500 to \$1,000. The increased fees had been approved by the Cemetery Committee.

A staff report was provided to the Council, which explained the need to raise the costs and City Administrator Josette Mitchell said the City intends to spend more to upkeep the cemetery in coming years. Mitchell said prices over the last 15 years have not kept up with expenses and the increases are necessary. Councilor McNair initially asked his fellow Councilors to not approve the new fee schedule until they could study the cemetery increases in more detail, but failure to approve the fee schedule would have delayed the new utility rates from taking effect, and McNair and Allen eventually relinquished and supported the Resolution.

Council Approves 2019-20 Budget – After holding a public hearing at which there was no comment from the audience, the Board approved Resolution 09-19, adopting the 2019-2020 budget. The budget totals \$7.6 million.

City Administrator Report – City Administrator Josette Mitchell told the Council the Rose Avenue Senior Center/Food Bank Project is still short about \$65,000. She said the City is working on accessing other funds, and has several promising leads.

Mitchell said the City will mark property lines at the cemetery house prior to putting it on the market in the next few weeks.

Mitchell said a bike hub kiosk has been installed at Anderson Park on the linear trail through an agreement with the Washington County Visitors Association. The kiosk will help direct bicyclist into the downtown.

Mitchell said new playground equipment for Anderson Park has been delayed a week, but the intention is to still have it installed by July 4.

Mitchell told the Council she will be in Salem on June 19 with members of the Vernonia SK8 group to present the City's application for a State Parks Grant to fund a skate board park.

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Mayor Appoints Davison to Cemetery Committee – With a recommendation from the Cemetery Committee and approval from the rest of the Council, Mayor Rick Hobart appointed Elaine Davison to the Cemetery Committee.

Topics From the Floor – Rhea Cox expressed concern about medical syringes that were found in Hawkins Park and asked what the community could do as a whole to both help the drug users and make sure our community is safe.

Whelan Easley introduced himself to the Council and told them he and his family are the people living in a tent at the end of Birch Street. He said his family is in the process of purchasing the property they are staying on, and that they are not homeless. He asked the Council to be patient as they try to make "their American Dream" a reality.

ODFW News: Commission Adopts Revised Wolf Plan

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Commission adopted a Wolf Plan on June 7 in a 6-1 vote, after hearing testimony from 44 people and reviewing thousands of public comments.

Allowing controlled take (limited regulated hunting and trapping of wolves) was one of the most controversial topics in the new Wolf Plan. The original Plan adopted in 2005 allowed for controlled take only in Phase 3 (currently eastern Oregon), in instances of recurring depredations or when wolves are a major cause of ungulate populations not meeting established management objectives or herd management goals. While ODFW believed it needed to remain a tool available for wolf management, the department has not proposed any controlled take of wolves and has no plans to at this time.

Commissioners made some changes related to "controlled take" from the proposed Plan. An addendum was added clearly stating that "Use of controlled take as a management tool requires Commission approval through a separate public rulemaking process" and the definition of controlled take was modified.

Additional minor changes were made to emphasize the importance of non-lethal tools to address wolf-livestock conflict and easy access to this information. Non-lethal measures to prevent wolf-livestock conflict continue to be emphasized in all phases of the Plan, and are required before any lethal control is considered.

After some discussion, Commissioners revised the definition of chronic depredation (which can lead to lethal control of wolves if non-lethals are in use and not working) in Phase 2 and 3 from two confirmed depredations with no specific time frame to two confirmed depredations in nine months.

The Wolf Plan will be filed with the Secretary of State and posted on the ODFW Wolves webpage (www.odfw.com/wolves).

Citizen of the Month



Mayor Rick Hobart recognized Ray Pelster as the Citizen of the Month for June 2019. Mayor Hobart thanked Pelster for his many years of service to the community as a volunteer who has looked after the downtown.

Salem Report *continued from page 3*

city in the state is facing challenges to provide housing options for families and the cost of housing is outpacing incomes. With a shortage of available homes, housing costs are continuing to rise. HB 2001 is seen as a way to increase more affordable housing opportunities because middle housing is less expensive than detached single family housing.

Many people have expressed opposition to the proposal saying it undermines Oregon's land use planning system, and local control. Residents of established, even historic districts are concerned about the destruction of a neighborhood's character. Some have cited the examples of gentrification, where existing affordable single-family homes have been demolished and replaced with more expensive

multi-unit housing. Others point to congestion problems, and a shortage of on-street parking options.

Supporters say HB 2001 is a solution to the housing affordability crisis, while opponents predict speculative re-development accompanied by increased demolition of the most-affordable existing housing and more displacement of the most-vulnerable residents. But I'm interested in your opinion and would welcome your comments to my office

by phone or email. This measure should be moving out of the Ways and Means Committee soon and will be coming to the House for a floor vote. In order to best represent the interests of House District 31, I'd like to hear from you.

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The Vernonia Transfer Station is scheduled to be open on the 2nd and 4th Saturday January - October

**June 22
July 13 & 27**

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, July 1, 2019
Monday, July 15, 2019

City Closures are scheduled for:
Thursday, July 4, 2019
Independence Day Holiday

Dates and times subject to change

Vernonia's Voice is published twice each month on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Look for our next issue on July 4.

Police Blotter June 1-15, 2019

Reports Taken/Arrests

- June 2, 2019 Arrest on a Warrant near Lone Pine Road
- June 9, 2019 Report of Assault IV Domestic, and Harassment II near North Mist Drive
- June 10, 2019 Report of Fire Department Assistance for a structure fire near Bridge Street
- June 11, 2019 Report of Criminal Mischief near Missouri Avenue
- June 11, 2019 Report of Criminal Mischief near East Bridge Street
- June 11, 2019 Report of Abandoned Vehicle Tow near East Bridge Street
- June 11, 2019 Informational Report Taken

Citations/Other

- June 1, 2019 Citation for violation of the Posted Speed 40/20 mph near Rose Avenue
- June 4, 2019 Citation for Driving Uninsured near Jefferson Avenue
- June 8, 2019 Citation for No Oregon Drivers License and Violation of the Posted

Speed near East Avenue

- June 8, 2019 Citation for Violation of the Posted Speed near California Avenue
- June 8, 2019 Citation for No Oregon Drivers License and no Motorcycle Endorsement near Maple Street
- June 12, 2019 Citation for Illegal Alteration or Display of Plates and Driving Uninsured near 1st Avenue
- June 12, 2019 Citation for No Oregon Drivers License near Nehalem HWY South
- June 13, 2019 Citation for Driving While Suspended and Driving Uninsured near Nehalem HWY South
- June 14, 2019 Citation for Driving While Suspended and Driving Uninsured near Bridge Street
- June 15, 2019 Citation issued near Knott Street for Violation of the Posted Speed 73/45 mph

Vernonia Police Department responds to calls that do not always end in Arrest, Report, or Citation. 6/01/2019 through 6/15/2019 VPD had 238 calls for service.