

STATIONS: Business group asks to axe River Quarter plan

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it. Known historically as the Woodmen of the World Building, the Pendleton Development Commission has shown interest in redeveloping it, and he wants to sell it to someone who shares that interest.

Although it wasn't designed that way, the council meeting ended up covering several other issues on Southwest Court.

New use for old fire station

The Pendleton Fire Department isn't set to move out of its 911 S.W. Court station until 2019, but Clearview Disability Resource Center, a nonprofit that advocates for disabled people and operates a medical supply closet, already has its eyes on it.

Clearview CEO Darrin Umbarger presented a letter to the council during the public comment section that states the organization's interest.

Umbarger wrote that Clearview has outgrown its small offices and 4,800-square-foot warehouse and wants to consolidate its properties under one roof. Clearview has grown from one employee in 2010 to 13, and needs at least 25 parking spots for its fleet of vehicles.

"We understand it will be a while before the building



Clearview Mediation is interested in acquiring the old Pendleton Fire Station on Court Ave. once the fire department moves to its new building on the old St. Anthony site.

is empty, but we are hoping to have a building secured for the future," Umbarger wrote in the letter. "We feel that removing the fire station would be more costly to the city than allowing it to be occupied."

Mayor John Turner said he and City Manager Robb Corbett would meet with

Umbarger on Wednesday to discuss his proposal.

Call to redraw River Quarter

A group calling itself the "Court St. Business Association" is asking the council to scrap its River Quarter Enhancement Plan.

The plan, which covers

Court Avenue from Southwest First Street to Southwest 10th, uses land use laws to encourage multi-story apartments, retail stores and restaurants along the Umatilla River.

The council concluded that the plan's requirements were to onerous for new development in 2015, and

the city has spent the ensuing time trying to devise a way to alter the plan that would make it more attractive to developers.

The business group wants to take it a step further.

Chad Miltenberger of Sign Men, at 803 S.W. Court Ave., presented a letter asking the council to

throw out the current plan and involve the group in creating a new one.

Miltenberger said he wanted the city to use a development similar to Shenzhen, China.

The Chinese government declared Shenzhen a "special economic zone" in 1980, which allowed foreign and domestic trade without authorization from the central government.

According to Miltenberger, this transformed Shenzhen from a village into a metropolis.

City Planner George Cress said the staff is currently soliciting input on the plan from developers and will include the business group in future discussions.

Round-Up opt out

The council unanimously voted to sell its final piece of interest in the Round-Up Grounds to the Round-Up Association's holding company for \$13,000.

Although the city sold the land to the Round-Up in 2011, the city maintained an interest in the property that allowed them to reclaim it if the association failed to hold a rodeo for two consecutive years.

With the interest sold, Kerns, the city attorney, said the Round-Up is now able to provide land to Blue Mountain Community College for its indoor arena project.

DEBATE: Commissioners have limited control over county's budget

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his second against Murdock. They were among six candidates who squared off in the 2013 May special election that saw Murdock emerge victorious. Bailor then lost in 2016 to Commissioner Bill Elfering of Hermiston.

Bailor's main complaint is what he sees as a lack of transparency in county government. Too often, he said, the commissioners decide something but the public does not know how or why. The county also is not preparing for the future, he said, lacking a strategic plan or even a committee on water. Umatilla County also is among the nine of Oregon's 36 that does not have a county manager.

"I think we'd have more transparency if we had a county manager," Bailor said.

He also remains incensed about commissioners raising their salaries \$8,000 in 2015 to \$86,273 a year. (The annual salary for the position now is \$90,852.) Bailor said he found it offensive Murdock called the increase a "bump," and if Bailor wins he said he would work for a "more realistic salary" but he did not pin down a figure.

Pullen is running for his first public office. He worked 14 years for the county, the last several as a mid-level manager in the assessment and taxation division. He said he got fed up watching wasteful spending and the county board's decision to cut staff when budgets were tight. So he resigned in December with the notion of running for commissioner to change how county government operates.

Eliminating jobs should be the last resort, Pullen contended, and if commissioners watched spending year-round and cut out waste, there would be money enough to keep staff. He did

not specify where wasteful spending occurs, nor which departments are the most wasteful.

Pullen also claimed Murdock is not in this race for the long haul. Rather, Pullen claimed, if Murdock wins he will retire after serving little more than half his term and nominate county tax assessor Paul Chalmers as his successor. Chalmers was Pullen's old boss.

Murdock said he has heard that rumor, but said if he wins he will finished his four-year term. Depending, of course, on what the county's charter review committee decides in 2019.

The committee, an independent panel of several citizens, is kicking the tires on the document that establishes the county government, from the board of commissioners to the election process. Murdock said he is keeping his personal opinions on how to best run county government to himself, in order to respect the work of the review committee. And if he wins re-election, he said he has no "personal interest" in ignoring the committee's recommendations.

Murdock pushes back at claims by Pullen and Bailor, but he is banking on his achievements as commissioner to convince voters. That includes spearheading the transfer of the Eastern Oregon Event and Trade Center to the city of Hermiston, as well as initiating the charter review and "right-sizing" county administration.

That last part led to the commissioners getting that pay raise three years ago for taking on new tasks after cutting three front office jobs, netting the county a savings of \$400,000.

Murdock said the county employs fewer people today than in years past, but the county is now in a better

place to deliver a stable level of services.

"In my four years as commissioner, not one taxpayer has called and asked for more employees," he said.

Murdock also said commissioners do not have total control over the county's \$80 million budget. The general fund relies on property tax revenue, and the board decides how to dole it out, but the public works department receives state and federal funding from gas taxes, and the board can't reallocate those funds. He also said most of county's money pays for employees, and that leaves a limited number of places for cuts to meet the budget.

This year, he said, all measures show the county is doing well, with the county's 300 employees receiving an average of \$26.59 per hour.

If no candidate gets more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two will appear on the November ballot. Otherwise, the winner will appear alone on the ballot with space for any write-in.

Position 2

County Commissioner Larry Givens serves or participates on multiple organizations and lobbying groups, including the national and state associations of counties. He defends trips to Salem or Washington, D.C., as necessary to ensuring lawmakers and policy shapers understand what's at stake in Umatilla County.

Opponent John Shafer has been using Givens' time outside the office and county against him. Shafer stated if he wins, residents can count on him being around to deal with their problems.

Givens uses an old metaphor from his grandmother to frame why he works outside the courthouse: "If you're not at the table when the meal is served, you're

going hungry." He said his participation in organizations allows him to fight for what Umatilla County needs, from getting federal and state agencies to cooperate on repairing the river levee in Milton-Freewater to the U.S. Forest Service dumping its old restriction on the harvest of trees larger than 21 inches in diameter from the Blue Mountains.

While Givens paints himself as something of a

facilitator achieving benefits for the county, Shafer points to more direct accomplishments—including his efforts in 2016 to get the Bank of Eastern Oregon to open a branch in Athena after U.S. Bank pulled out. Shafer said that's the kind of activism and improvement he wants to bring to county government.

Yet he also has the burden of convincing voters he is not a pawn of the sheriff's office. Shafer said he is his own man,

and Sheriff Terry Rowan is not the kind of person to try and influence him if he does win. Shafer said he would resign his county job and his job as mayor of Athena if he won the election.

The incumbents and the challengers in all local races get another opportunity to persuade voters Thursday starting at 6:30 at the Pendleton High School auditorium. The event is free and open to the public.

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CARE: Most see 15-20 patients

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"I think they've kind of left the ball in my court," she said. "I asked them what I could call about, and they said I could call them any time I need if I'm not feeling myself and need them to check my vitals."

Salter said she feels a little reluctant to call because she didn't want to bother them needlessly.

"I did find it helpful to

have a resource short of 911," she said.

But Marcum encouraged patients not to be hesitant about asking for help.

"They can still call me for reassurance," Marcum said. "If it's something I feel is more appropriate for the doctor, maybe I can go out and see if I can gather information for the doctor."

The program was funded by the Local Community

Advisory Council grant in its first year, and the department just received an Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization grant.

Marcum said currently, community paramedics see 15 or 20 patients, but there's potential for the program to grow.

Contact UCFD for more information about the Community Paramedic program, at 541-567-8822.