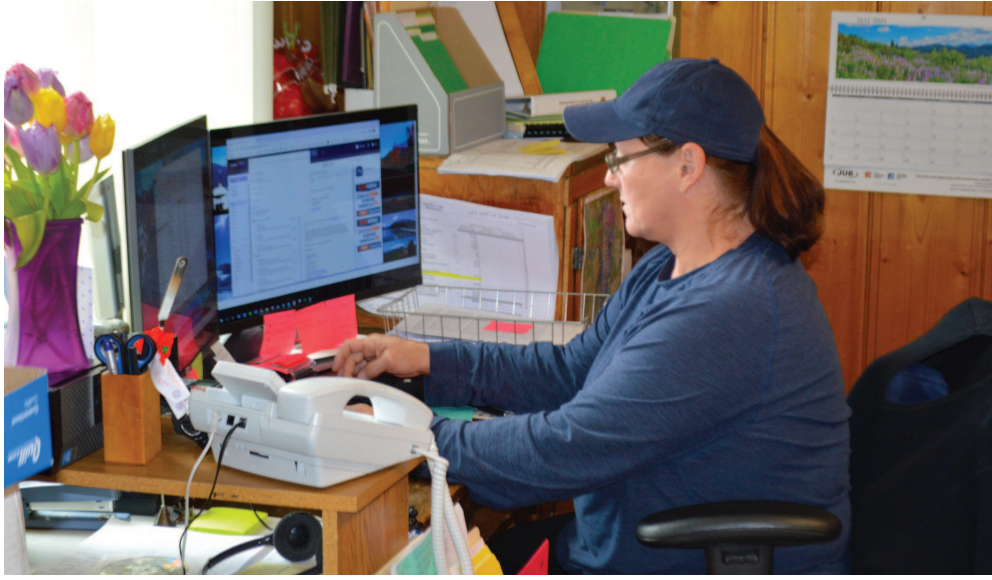


Joseph city recorder likes the personal contact

Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain



Steve Tool/Wallowa County Chieftain

Joseph City recorder, Belinda Buswell, hard at work in her office at the back of city hall. Buswell started as a general clerk in October of 2018 and was promoted to the recorder position in January of this year.

After more than a year of shuffling and re-shuffling of employees at Joseph City Hall, the office dust has settled with employees that appear to be in it for the long haul.

Belinda Buswell, who started as the general clerk less than a year ago, is one of these employees.

Although not technically a Wallowa County native, Buswell has a long history in the county. She was born in Sulphur, Louisiana. At 3 years old, her father passed away and her family relocated to Joseph. Within three months, her family home caught fire and claimed the life of Buswell's 7-year-old sister.

After Buswell graduated from Joseph High School, she married and had a son, Jeffrey, and a daughter, Jordan. At 35 she returned to college and received her AAS in electronic engineering and was employed at Intel in Hillsboro from 2002-2009. At Intel she became versed in databases, computer systems and system efficiency. She left Intel at her seven-year sabbatical to pursue a degree in business administration with a concentration of leadership, organization and management, and graduated in 2012.

From there, she accepted a position at Barrick Gold in Nevada and was responsible for training all employ-

ees, contractors, and visitors to the Mine Safety & Health Administration standards and procedures. In August 2016 she returned home to care for her elderly parents. She is working on finishing a bachelor's degree in psychology and plans to pursue a master's degree in the same field. She is happy with her return to Wallowa County where she is surrounded by family and friends. In her free time, Buswell enjoys the outdoors, and loves to read and learn new things.

A friend told Buswell

about the general clerk position, which interested her as her mother, Joyce Wicklander, served as Joseph

'THE MOST REWARDING PART OF MY JOB IS HELPING OTHERS BUILD THE LIFE THEY WANT IN OUR SMALL COMMUNITY WHILE MAINTAINING THE DESIRED QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR CITIZENS.'

Belinda Buswell

city recorder. The city hired Buswell in October 2018 and appointed her as recorder in January 2019.

Buswell's position is one of the most complex professions in local government.

By turns, she serves as council clerk, records manager, city elections officer, treasurer/finance officer, personnel director, insurance officer, payroll reporting and has numerous other duties. The job does present its difficulties, although Buswell is more than up for the task.

"I think the most difficult part of my job is educating the council, employees, and citizens on ethics and ordinances," she said. "Some want their agenda promoted no matter what Oregon stat-

utes, ordinances, or ethical decisions are impacted. They simply don't understand the process and it is my job to educate them on the policies and procedures required to proceed with their requests."

Buswell said she will not compromise her ethics or morals, no matter what heat it brings. She added that education is key when making ethical decisions, avoiding conflict of interests, and setting an example by her actions. "I think having an education and work history backed in ethics makes it easy for me to make ethical decisions," she said.

Of course, the job has its rewards, something that Buswell appreciates.

"I think the most rewarding part of my job is helping others build the life they want in our small community while maintaining the desired quality of life for our citizens," she said. "The important task in doing that is following your code in the process."

Some of Buswell's duties may surprise Joseph citizens. With her background in safety and health, she works closely with the public works supervisor to establish a culture that overflows into employees' personal lives. She said this sets an example for others and makes it part of the personnel experience, not just another task.

"When you've seen the loss of life and safety flaws that have caused permanent health issues or the loss of

life that I have personally experienced, it makes a huge impact on those you share it with," she said. "It isn't just a policy anymore, it's someone you know standing in front of you and sharing the worst days of their life with you, it definitely makes a difference when you expect your team to make safe choices."

Buswell's end goal as city recorder is to organize the city's entire system as a whole.

"It requires clear deliverables for a team of capable individuals, training and support of those individuals, and a council that supports the direction ... I am here to create that system by being the common thread in all departments to assist them with their deliverables," she said. "If you set your team up for success and get out of their way, they achieve much more than they think was ever attainable."

Having an excellent team and an attitude of transparency is the key to success, according to Buswell. They know their job is to make the city a better place to live, and the whole team welcomes input from Joseph citizens.

"My hope is that the citizens of Joseph will see what we are trying to accomplish for them, stop by and ask questions when they arise, and remember that change is a process that is sometimes difficult, messy, and uncomfortable," she said. "In the end I believe it will make the city a better place for all."

Pot: Lostine resident can legally sell recreational marijuana in Joseph store

Continued from Page A1

"There's been a lot of work put into it, and we hope to run a good, professional business out of that building," he said. Pollard added he would sell his own product at the establishment as well as that from other producers.

The applicant said he had no problems with break-ins or disapproving neighbors at his business in The Dalles. He stated that he worked closely with law enforcement, particularly in supplying surveillance footage of the area filmed by his security cameras and added his business is focused on teaching people to use their product responsibly.

"Anyone is free to call me anytime and ask me questions," he said. "I'm in the phone book."

In response to questions from councilor Marty Hamilton, Pollard assured attendees that no use of his product in any manner on his premises is legal. He also said IDs are checked as soon as a customer enters as no one under the age of 21 is allowed inside the business. He added that customers tend to stay in the business from 2-5 minutes and parking should not be an issue.

In response to a Hamilton question about advertising



Steve Tool/Chieftain

The future home of Wallowa County's first recreational marijuana dispensary, MThrive Organics LLC, located at 600 W. Main St. in Joseph.

signage, Pollard replied that he planned to have two signs: One to replace the East Fork sign and a 2-by-2-foot sign on the front of the business. He also said he does his advertising online.

Pollard also listed the products most likely to be sold from the business. These include "bulk flower," intended for smoking, and extracts, edibles, topicals and medicinals, including smoking medicinals. He noted the medicinal marijuana is generally stronger than its recreational counterpart.

Sturm asked Pollard how he planned to control customers who might be purchasing product for minors.

"I can't control anybody outside the building," he

replied. "So if someone walks in the building, I have to card them and make sure they're 21. After they walk out of the building, and wherever they go — I'm not in control of that." He also noted liquor stores can have the same problem.

Collier asked if Pollard's store in The Dalles heard complaints from neighbors about undesirable elements in the area after he opened the store. Pollard said he hadn't heard complaints and had a good rapport with his neighbors.

"Marijuana's in Oregon,

and it's always been in Oregon, so I don't know that we're introducing marijuana to a location or to a spot," he said. "We're changing it from an unregulated to a regulated market."

Sajonia told the audience that Joseph voters approved the implementation of marijuana dispensaries and that the city issued conditional use permit for a dispensary because Pollard's application complied with the city's regulations regarding dispensaries. She added the city staff did extensive research into the matter as did Pollard. She followed by asking for testimony from those in favor of dispensaries.

Joseph citizen Dan Deboie reminded the audience the city had voted for dispensaries and added that as a volunteer bus driver, he estimated that 60-70 percent of the veterans he drove to VA hospitals and appointments said they either do or have smoked marijuana. Scott Lanier said he had entered a dispensary in Portland and found security to be as rigorous as Pollard said. "You need businesses

here, and you need employees here," he said. One other person testified in the same vein.

In response to a question by audience member Evelyn Swart about regulation, Sajonia replied the OLCC regulated marijuana sales, and the sheriff's department would also help. Pollard said he'd never had compliance infractions.

"The regulation of this product is insane," he said.

Barb Sexton said she wasn't necessarily opposed and understood of the benefits of medicinal marijuana. However, she thought the city should prohibit the use of a marijuana leaf on the store sign as it could be seen from Main Street.

The council went into discussion at that point and Sajonia suggested the council vote to have Wallowology and the dispensary create diagonal parking spaces to help allevi-

ate that problem and she noted the city cannot prohibit a leaf on a marijuana sign at this time because city ordinances did not cover it.

Sajonia read a letter from Jerry Crandall into the record. Crandall said that he had lived behind the dispensary area for 11 years and expressed concern about the effect on his property values. He noted that the city needed tourist revenue, the dispensary and the several failed businesses before it had contributed to parking problems in the area that included impeding traffic and obstructing property access. Other problems cited included trespassing, littering, public urination, vomiting and loud arguments and music.

Crandall also doubted marijuana revenue would cover such costs as policing the business. He added he could get behind non-THC medicinal products.

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