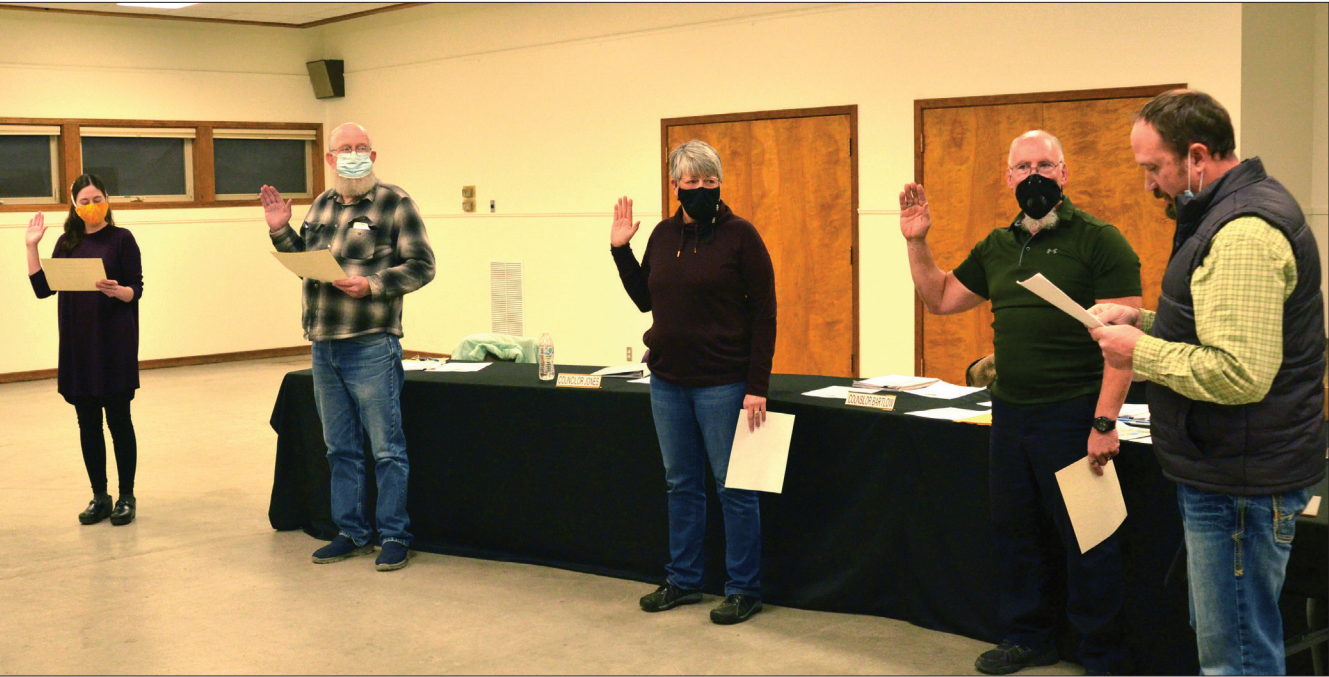




Joseph City Administrator Larry Braden, right, swears in councilors before the Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021, Joseph City Council meeting. From left are Kirsten Rohla, Steve Barlow, Tammy Jones and Matt Soots.

New Joseph council wants more input

Residents committee to be formed under former mayor

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Increased involvement by city residents was a major theme of the first Joseph City Council meeting of 2021, as a new mayor and two new council members were sworn in Thursday, Jan. 7.

After Mayor pro-tem Kathy Bingham called the meeting to order, she turned the meeting over to city Administrator Larry Braden swore in city Councilors Kirsten Rohla, Tamera Jones, Stephen Bartlow and Matt Soots, all of whom had prevailed in the November election. Braden then swore in Belinda Buswell as Joseph’s new mayor. She defeated Teresa Sajonia in November.

One of the areas the council is seeking public involvement in is the business registration proposed during the December meeting. Councilors emphasized it is not a business license, but merely a registration to provide the city with information on what businesses are operating within the city. They did mention that it could become a business license, if so desired, but at present that is not the aim.

At present, the registration comes with a nominal \$20 fee, but it has yet to be decided if that will be an annual or one-time fee.

The council agreed to have copies of the draft registration form at City Hall and to post it on the city’s website and Facebook page for the public to view and provide input back to City Hall.

It was suggested a decision on adopting the registration form be delayed for as long as April in order to gather as much public input as possible.

Councilor Matt Soots emphasized that waiting for more input from business owners makes sense.

“A lot of our businesses



Joseph City Administrator Larry Braden, right, swears in the new Mayor Belinda Buswell, before the City Council meeting Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021, as Councilman Steve Bartlow watches.

wintered over so a lot of the business owners aren’t even available in a lot of cases or some are just one day a week,” he said.

Near the end of the meeting, Buswell introduced former Mayor Peggy Kite-Martin, who served from 2005-09. Kite-Martin said she is interested in starting a “citizen involvement committee” to provide a forum for public input and a source of education on city matters for residents.

She said she set up such a committee near the end of her term, but believes it never went anywhere.

“It would be an open door for people to come in and be involved,” she said. “Our city is so full of talented and amazing people.”

Buswell said she liked the idea.

“The more input we have the better solutions we usually come up with,” the new mayor said. “It isn’t just the council; we’re a team for Joseph.”

Buswell said that with matters before the city such as sewer rate hikes for the new sewage treatment plant and the business registration, such a committee would be helpful in informing the public.

“It’s a good way to get the

word out about what’s happening,” she said.

She agreed to have it placed on the council agenda for February and, in the meantime, post it on the city’s website and Facebook page. The hope is, she said, to be able to establish and appoint members to the committee in February.

In another matter, Bingham urged her fellow city officials to take care what they say in public.

“Our words will be repeated, and often embellishment may be added so that what was said and what is repeated will be totally different than what was said or meant,” she said.

She also asked for a clarification from Buswell on a quote of hers in the Nov. 11 *Chieftain*, in which she said one of her first orders of business is to “get the city operating on an ethical and transparent basis.”

Buswell said that what she meant was to do for the Joseph residents what they’d asked her for, and her comments shouldn’t be misconstrued as to imply the city had been lacking in ethics and transparency.

“I’d be asking for increased — not new, not starting — but increased fiscal responsibility, increased

ethical decision making and increased transparency,” Buswell said.

She said some residents said they felt like things were being done that they’d never heard of.

“They felt like they were being left out in the cold,” she said. “That’s what they came to me and asked me to run for.”

She said this is another reason why residents need to attend council meetings and get more involved. More than 30 people attended last week’s meeting.

The council also:

- Approved a resolution to accept Coronavirus Relief Funds of \$21,172 into the city’s City Hall Building Fund to pay for the electronic system to allow the city to hold public meetings remotely. Braden said that system should be operational by the February meeting.
- Was advised by Braden that Crystal Bronson, his administrative assistant, was resigning effective Friday, Jan. 8, because she took another job. He’s been advertising and interviewing to replace her and hopes to make a selection early this week.
- Voted to appoint Bingham as mayor pro-tem for the next two years.

IN BRIEF

Chamber awards banquet canceled

ENTERPRISE — The annual awards banquet of the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce will not happen in its usual fashion in February, according to an announcement by the chamber’s board of directors.

After serious discussion, the board decided to postpone the banquet to 2022. They discussed presenting the awards in a virtual format and decided it would not give the nominees the true recognition due to them.

“We were disheartened to have to make this decision, but felt this was the best solution,” the announcement stated.

All the nominations turned in for this year will be saved and rolled into the 2022 nominations. They will be included and turned into the awards committee when they meet next year.

In 2020, some 200 people turned out for the banquet to honor distinguished residents of Wallowa County for their achievement. It was the 40th year for such a banquet.

STIF advisory council meets for a second time Friday

The Wallowa County Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Advisory Council had a public meeting to discuss and approve the STIF grant application Monday, Jan. 11, in the Thornton Conference Room of the Wallowa County Courthouse at 101 S. River St.

A second STIF Advisory Council meeting is set for 1:30 p.m. Friday, Jan.

15, also in the Thornton conference room to adopt and submit the grant to the state for approval.

The meeting is open to the public, and a Zoom link will be available at www.ceno.org. For more information, contact the Wallowa County Commissioners Office at 541-426-4543, ext. 1130.

Wolves delisted, remain protected in Oregon

SALEM — Gray wolves no longer receive protection under the federal Endangered Species Act, but they do from the state of Oregon.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally removed the gray wolf species from the endangered species list effective Monday, Jan. 4, in the lower 48 United States. The change transfers wolf protections from the federal government to state governments. In Oregon, that job goes to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The known wolf population in the state has grown from 14 in 2009 to 158 at the end of 2019, with 141 of those found in ODFW’s eastern management zone.

ODFW said in a press release the most significant change to the management of Oregon’s wolves will be in the form of depredation. ODFW could allow the lethal removal of a wolf in situations where nonlethal measures have proven unsuccessful.

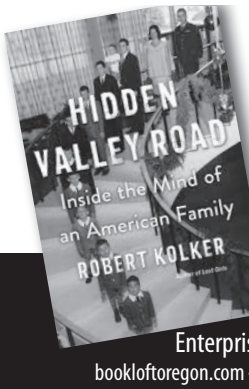
Nonlethal and preventative measures for resolving conflicts with wolves are a focus for ODFW.

“Wolves remain protected throughout the state. Hunting and trapping of wolves remains prohibited statewide,” according to an ODFW press release.

— EO Media Group

THANK YOU

The residents of Alpine House Assisted Living all say THANK YOU to the staff at Alpine House, the Elks Lodge, Mrs. Patty Moffitt, the groups that came to sing, those who played piano and violin music and others in the community that made our Christmas joyful and memorable.



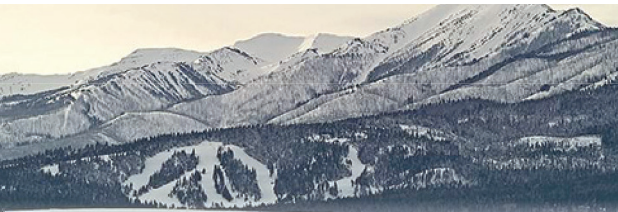
This week's featured book.

Hidden Valley Road

by Robert Kolker

107 E. Main St.
Enterprise OR 541-426-3351
bookloftoregon.com • manager@bookloft.org





Ferguson Ridge Ski Area tends to be the spot, when the snow begins, for our Wallowa County community to gather. The peace sign on the mountain can be seen for miles and is a symbol of just that, peace, beauty, tranquility and unity. A lot of work goes into opening and maintaining this little winter wonderland and today we would like to honor those folks who make it so. Thank you to the Eagle Cap Ski Club and their group of volunteers including Charlie Kissinger, Brian Oliver, Willy Locke, Tim Locke, Scott Miller, Mike Hammond, Rocky Thies, John Gaterud, Nick Lunde, Brian Coughlan, Jeremiah Marsh, Michael Junkins, Jerry Hustafa, Joe McCormack, Lou Perry, Alan Klages, Blane Hayes, Paul and Penny Arentsen, Dick Stangle and family, the Hillock family and Amanda Rahn at Rahn's Sanitary. You all are this week's choice for People Making a Difference!



Proudly Sponsored by

Ed Staub & Sons

Energy. Community. Service.
201 E. Hwy 82, Enterprise • 541-426-0320
www.edstaub.com



Follow us on Facebook!

NEED A PLUMBER?

Tired of waiting 3 or 4 weeks?
Wallowa Lake YES

Hot water heaters, toilets, all repairs, remodel.

Jack Rudd Plumbing

541-963-0921 or 541-786-0974

HOT PIZZA • COLD BEER



DINE IN OR TAKE OUT
Now Taking Reservations

WINTER HOURS
Wed. & Thur. 10am - 7pm
Fri. & Sat. 10am - 8pm
Sun. 10am - 7pm

TAKE OUT ORDERS • CALL 541-263-0874

M. CROW • LOSTINE, OR

ADVERTISE TODAY

in Wallowa County's only newspaper!

Wallowa County CHIEFTAIN



Call Jennifer Cooney today at 541-805-9630 to place your ad