



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Lostine City Recorder Toni Clary addresses the Lostine City Council in the gazebo of Neal Park behind City Hall in August. The City Council agreed Wednesday, March 4, 2021, to a contract to lease a portion of the park to the U.S. Postal Service for a new post office.

Lostine finalizes contract for new post office

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

LOSTINE — A final contract for a new Lostine Post Office has been signed and plans are underway to move from its current location on Highway 82 across from City Hall, city Recorder Toni Clary said in an email Thursday, March 4.

The City Council met the previous evening to finalize the contract.

Mayor Dusty Tippet said Monday, March 8, that the final aspect of the contract was negotiating the rates for the electrical power. He said that was completed March 4 and a Pacific Power and Light power pole can now be installed.

He said no water or septic utilities will be needed for the approximately 70-by-50-foot modular building that will be located on the southeastern corner of Neal Park behind City Hall and on Elizabeth Street. Tippet said it is expected to break ground for the building in April.

"I wouldn't expect it'll take super long," the mayor said

of anticipated construction time.

The lease for the current post office expires in August. The current facility is in a portion of a home and the homeowners declined to renew the lease because they wish to regain use of that portion of their building.

The city is renting space to the U.S. Postal Service for five years, with renewable options after that. Construction will be required to leave a large tree in the park untouched, Tippet said. The city will be responsible for snow removal in parking area.

"Any money that comes in we'll try to use for park improvement," he said. "We're hopeful it will increase usage of park — people can come and get their mail while their kids play on the swings and stuff."

In other business Wednesday, the council swore in Rick Boyd to fill the vacant council seat No. 3.

Skate Park: 'We're really trying to help this group of boys take some ownership'

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"I'm going to try to do it, but there's no guarantees" as to succeeding without injury, senior Theo Noble said.

Griffin, the other experienced skater, agreed he's eager to try the half-pipe.

"Yeah, just like Theo said — no guarantees," he said.

Cash McQuown and Christian Morris, neither of whom has experience on a skateboard, said they are both

eager to learn. The addition of the half-pipe is a major reason they are motivated, they said.

Maria Weer, lead teacher at the 17-student alternative school, eagerly supports what the youths are doing.

"This year, my senior boys really felt passionate about improving the skate park and making it more accessible," she said. "We're really trying to help this group of boys take some ownership."



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Ron Pickens, a teacher at the Wallowa County Alternative Education Program, center, and student Theo Noble measure off the distance needed to install a proposed half-pipe at the Enterprise skate park. From left, are students Cash McQuown, Christian Morris and Mason Griffin.

COVID-19: New vaccine in very limited supply

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March 11, to schedule any eligible person (Phase 1a, Phase 1b groups 1-6) who is interested in receiving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine," Pace said in an email Monday. "There is an incredibly limited supply (100 doses) on hand and appointments will be made according to availability. We do not know if or when we will receive additional shipments of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine."

So far, the hospital has vaccinated 1,497 individuals with one dose of the Moderna vaccine, and now 1,007 people have received both doses.

The news of the third vaccine came during the same week Wallowa County had a fifth death attributed to COVID-19, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

The OHA on Thursday morning, March 4, reported the death of a 47-year-old man from the county. The

individual died on March 2 at Portland's Legacy Emanuel Medical Center, according to the report — more than a month after testing positive for COVID-19 on Jan. 25 — and the man had underlying conditions.

The county also had single cases reported Thursday and Friday, which raised its total since the start of the pandemic a year ago to 144.

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Council:

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- Heard from Council President Jenni Word that the Police Committee is on the final steps of completing the pre-employment process for police chief. Wallowa County Sheriff's Deputy Kevin McQuead was offered the position in February pending successful completion of the pre-employment checks.

- Approved a formal recommendation by the Planning Commission to approve the new Design and Development Standards for the city. Anderson Perry prepared the standards. After the council's vote, the standards went into effect immediately.

- Approved Resolution No. 660 to adopt a water and sewer line installed by a resident.

- During a work session prior to the meeting, Dr. Elizabeth Powers, of Wallowa Memorial Hospital, presented information on testing wastewater for COVID-19 tracing.

The next City Council meeting will be Monday, April 12. A work session begins at 6 p.m., with the regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.

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